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ARCHITECTURE OF THOUGHT

Andrzej Piotrowski

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Andrzej Piotrowski

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For Joanna

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Introduction
The Moving Target of Architecture

History and theories of architecture seem to be chasing a moving target. Despite the continuous efforts to catalog architectural products and to identify conceptual programs that have motivated their designers, built environments—historical and lived-in structures—defy taxonomies of form and challenge simple notions of intentional creativity or problem solving. Questions of what architecture is and what the design process involves produce many divergent, often contradictory, answers. Unequivocal answers usually eliminate what makes architecture unique—the inherent ambiguity of its meanings. At the same time, it appears paradoxical that whenever a new critical theory redefines what we know about the past or present world, built environments substantiate such discoveries. Buildings and urban spaces have an inexhaustible capacity to reveal the traces of previously overlooked cultural and political phenomena. It is as if material constructs that surround people and frame their interactions record life in its fullest complexity.

Probing this seeming paradox, this book proposes that architecture is an example of a unique but insufficiently explored cultural practice. Built forms have been instrumental in shaping thought and disseminating new ways of thinking. The process is different, however, from that of communication. While it is assumed that verbal processes play a dominant role in the transmission of messages that shape cultural interactions, material forms have served as a venue for a much broader spectrum of exchanges. Built environments have focused attention on and implied attitudes toward important issues of cultural identity and power relationships before verbal discourses could circumscribe them. Before such pressing questions were turned into nominal statements, knowledge, or ideological programs, they were explored as modes of perceiving, imagining, remembering, and sense making.[1] Spatial and visual constructs played a key role in these processes.[2] Publicly accessible and/or visually present, they have helped test new patterns of thought. These processes frequently operated on a culturally subconscious level. People who created representational artifacts as well as those who faced their evocative power could not consciously determine the full scope of issues they were dealing with. Verbal statements concerning such forms usually reflect only the most literal or symbolically conventional aspects of what people were encouraged to consider. Indeterminate in terms of verbal communication, these material

practices worked nevertheless. They have prompted the most nuanced processes of cultural negotiations, ideological exchanges, as well as practices of domination and resistance. They encouraged some thoughts and prevented others. These phenomena remain insufficiently explored because dominant research methods, especially those used to analyze architecture, and the common understanding of what architecture is are steeped in logocentric and reductive assumptions.[3]

One of the most common assumptions is that "architecture articulates intent," that is, each building consists of attributes shaped by the designer's will and the technical features dictated by universal laws of physics and economy.[4] General categories of architectural knowledge or criteria determining value in a building are rooted in this belief. Thus, for example, a famous contemporary or historical monument of architecture is expected to be one in which the intellectual work of its creators has perfectly synthesized ideological issues of its place and time. It is supposedly the brilliance of designers—architects and enlightened patrons—that produces an emblematic expression of high culture. Their ability to bring together abstract issues and solve technical problems results in a unique conceptual integrity, which symbolizes, they say, a superior understanding of that cultural reality.

Opposing that perspective is vernacular architecture, which is supposedly determined by climate, local materials, and available techniques, its consistency resulting from the refinement of unavoidable solutions. People who create such buildings do not aspire to a self-conscious understanding of their culture but rather approach constructed environments as an integral part of life. They do not need formally trained designers or theories of architecture, yet their knowledge is cumulative, refined through generations and broadly shared. While technical experimentation informs the construction of vernacular buildings, their meanings tacitly belong to common symbolic practices, customs, and spatial rituals. In this way the concept of vernacular architecture complements the notion of high culture and affirms the duality of will and necessity as primary components of architectural solutions. Together, monuments of architecture and vernacular buildings determine how technical knowledge and artistic creativity suffice to define what architecture is or is not. In this epistemological model, buildings lacking this kind of clarity are inferior and deserve less attention.

Another popular assumption determines the common understanding of the contemporary function of an architect— that designers merely respond to what people need or want. Seemingly, customers are in charge of defining pragmatic and symbolic intentions behind projects, while designers solve technical problems to satisfy those requirements and give the best—the most efficient and beautiful—material shape to the solution. Such

an assumption integrates the current model of professional services with the logic of the market-driven economy.[5] Architects compete because the market constantly monitors their performance and rewards those who produce better, or rather more spectacular, responses to comparable programs, sites, and budgets. This approach would not be possible, however, without a less obvious assumption: an uncritical trust that people are actually aware of what they need and can articulate what they desire. This trust produces an impression that, for example, architectural fashion is benign, a mere expression of the freedom of choice and somehow capricious attitude that clients have toward aesthetic preferences. Complex issues of contemporary buildings—ways in which they are infused with meanings and partake in shaping people's identities and aspirations—are lost in this reading of the function of a customer and a designer and by the notion of architectural services.[6]

These assumptions also operate in traditional architectural scholarship. If constructed environments are believed to have resulted from procedures based on goal setting and problem solving, the task of understanding a building would follow the same logic. Thus such studies seek explicit information about a commission, its purpose, intended meanings, preexisting conditions of the site, budget, available construction techniques, as well as the designer's educational background and political and economic affiliations. Scholars search for logical connections among all of these factors and, after filtering them through a system of cause-and-effect dependencies and considering them within the continuity of evolving design styles and/or intellectual trends, their findings produce the traditional knowledge of architectural history.

Contemporary studies frequently fall into the same epistemological trap, although, unlike traditional approaches, the framework of new critical theories admits that not only knowledge but also the criteria defining truth and relevance in what one knows have been subject to political and economic forces. Some thirty years ago, Michel Foucault, for example, showed that buildings have played a profound role in the way power "produces reality," including not only the sense of social subjectivity but cultural relationships in general.[7] The very notion of space or its representational function has been identified as politically charged.[8] Contemporary scholars consider ethnicity, gender, or race as playing a decisive role in setting up the production of knowledge and shaping attitudes toward lived reality. In these approaches, concepts such as high culture or transcendental meanings become symptomatic of oppression, of mechanisms that subjugated colonized cultures, other religions, or the lives of those not allowed to speak for themselves. Because these kinds of studies problematize assumptions about cultural phenomena at the level of their political constitution, they helped reveal previously silenced complexities in material, spatial, and

visual practices. Unfortunately, while searching for ways in which reality is shaped, these studies frequently assume an explicit intentionality behind social and political mechanisms and count architecture, first of all, in the category of means of control and expression. As soon as such an assumption is made, built environments are seen again as resulting from conclusive discourses, processes of political determinism, and self-conscious actions.

The logocentric turn in contemporary critical theories adds to the problem and plays a significant role in preventing a new kind of critical engagement with issues of architectural production. If one assumes that "we know no world that is not organized as a language, we operate with no other consciousness but one structured as a language," the symbolic ordering of lived reality must appear as determined by processes of verbal communication and dominant systems of narratives.[9] Consequently, even the most advanced theories reduce visual and spatial environments to tools, which give symbolic and material form to agendas supposedly preceding and structuring them. Architecture, when considered as a cultural and artistic construction, is much more complex than such studies admit.

To move beyond the limitations of these dominant assumptions about knowledge, this work employs two methodological strategies. The first integrates design with the whole spectrum of other material practices of thought-shaping. In this book, architecture becomes synonymous with the effort to organize thinking itself, and consequently the cultural functioning of buildings is presented as inseparable from other modes of cultural production. The discussion that follows includes some "monuments of architecture" but also little-known buildings, domestic spaces, interior decorations, or industrial structures. Such spatial constructions are analyzed against disseminated images, conceptual sketches, religious sculptures and ceremonies, elements of apparel design, illustrated magazines, books, and theoretical discourses. Only together do they approximate the actual spectrum of practices that made the cultural reality of a particular time or place *thinkable*.[10] These diverse material constructs are discussed as manifestations of thoughts in the process of acquiring cultural focus and consistency.

The second methodological strategy reveals how architecture and other material practices made nascent concepts and attitudes mentally accessible. To overcome the limitations of traditional scholarship, I import into explorations of architectural history conceptual practices that are characteristic of design processes. The illustrations in this book focus attention on the difficult-to-register aspects of material forms and help to build discourse around and in partnership with nonverbal patterns of thought.

This possibility is best illustrated by the way designers establish similar processes. Contemporary architects follow a variety of routines, but certain characteristics of

conceptual efforts make their work unique. Let us omit the reductive procedures that help some designers to streamline the decision-making process by conforming to a predefined agenda or a convention or by turning an architectural commission into a set of problems so well-defined that sometimes no architect is needed to solve them. Let us also put aside those program- or method-based operations that assure the predictability of design outcomes. Rather, let us follow Andrew Ballantyne's assertion that architects designing buildings, especially prominent buildings, "are always in service of something that is . . . more powerful than them—usually something impersonal (institutional and abstract) and always formless until it has been given an embodiment in building."[11] This transition from the formless to the perceivable is essential in any conceptual process. When a building being commissioned is acknowledged for its complexity and its evocative features are accepted as difficult to define, the conceptualization of a project works in a particular way. Future users and those representing interests of a larger community participate in a process in which the immaterial parameters of the project are explored as inseparable from technical solutions. During that phase, architects develop sketchy proposals, which are presented to all involved in order to trigger responses in their imagination and resonate with their memories. People's reactions to such explorations identify which attributes of architecture may play a key role in shaping the project and how its purpose surpasses the pragmatic statements and criteria. If truly conceptual, such a process is reiterative and involves exchanges between different modes of thought and points of view. To a certain degree, such studies must rely on a preexisting expertise and set of conventions, but they also explore and finally produce a project-specific knowledge of relevant issues. The role of representational, symbolic, and analytical statements that architects generate is telling.[12] Everything architects produce—sketches, models, functional diagrams, technical drawings, cost analysis spreadsheets, and verbal explanations—supports the process of negotiations and distillation of conceptual ideas. Intentionally incomplete and selective representations—drawings or models—play a key role in these efforts. They shift thinking between intention, discovery, invention, illustration, interpretation, and analysis, to identify and organize the essential attributes of prospective reality. By studying the spatial and material characteristics of design proposals and repeatedly testing what registers in the minds of people, architects explore the complexity of issues and forces that shape the building. The process makes features of the new reality accessible to all involved.[13] Consequently, participants shape not only the physical structure but also the ways of thinking about it.[14] This way of designing is not deterministic because it simultaneously defines and resolves the design task.

My second methodological strategy operates in a similar way. In this book, registering how perception was implied by a particular composition is indispensible in determining how people were encouraged to think. The study turns these ways of perceiving and thinking into tools of exploration. Multiple images focus attention on nonverbal attributes of reality. As in the design process, they map, frame, and highlight the relevant attributes of the case studies. Unconventional illustrations test phenomena of perception for their ability to solicit a mental response. They graphically explore how and to what degree material forms made difficult issues mentally accessible.

Built environments provide an inexhaustible resource for these kinds of studies. They have always continued the conceptual processes beyond the moment of physical construction. Architecture and urban spaces have mediated the thoughts of those who made, inhabited, interacted with, interpreted, and acted on them in some way. Buildings engage other buildings and all those attributes of the material, social, and political world that frame everyday life. Without focusing attention on themselves, the best examples of architecture reveal or make thinkable the complexity of relationships within their physical surroundings and societies. Buildings not only continue to highlight issues and attitudes that were distilled during the design process but they also absorb cultural changes and shifts in thinking. Historically and today, built structures have accommodated various and frequently conflicted concepts of reality. Consider, for example, places where different cultures have coexisted for ages, temples that have been appropriated by different religions, or places where the contemporary migrant communities settle.[15] A building or a city, although bound to a place and long lasting, remains open to interpretations as a symbolic environment. Its initially intended program is never stagnant. A "building becomes a plural site of which the traditional function is but a single trope," as Andrew Benjamin calls it, "because of the recognition that contemporaneous with this, as the building's logic, is the politics of that building."[16] Materiality of architecture, its construction of space and light phenomena, how the building implies relationships among people using it, how it prompts who controls its symbolic features, or how the structure metaphorically resembles other places or concepts, all these attributes operate on the level of a nascent thought. Buildings engage attention rather than shape rational understanding; they prompt an attitude rather than form a correct knowledge or interpretation. In this way physical buildings function like design sketches and prompt directed but open-ended insights. Because buildings do not impose concepts of reality but make them thinkable, many ideologies may coexist in a dialogue with one another within the same physical space.[17]

With the help of the two methodological strategies, this book reveals that material environments and visual practices have been instrumental in shaping thoughts and disseminating them across time and cultural divisions. This selection of cases focuses on seemingly conflicted or strangely complex instances of material production, those that tend to escape the traditional scholarship. Thus the chapter about medieval modalities of thought addresses the discrepancy between currently dominant ways of knowing art and architecture and the Byzantine concepts of theology—a unique way of reaching beyond the knowable. It shows that Middle Byzantine architecture is symptomatic of a little-known way of thinking about reality and representation. Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas becomes a site that tests the limits of visual perception and religious thought. The primary purpose of its representational structure was to keep manifestations of religious concepts at the limit of conscious understanding and to explore the unknowable. Yet, what Byzantines considered the most precious outcome of such practices—how the evocative vagueness of experimental phenomena informed Christian imagination—was identified as vulnerability by the Roman West. Gothic in architecture and Scholasticism in theology were triggered when Westerners absorbed and appropriated that truly unique Byzantine way of thinking.

The notion of religious syncretism in Mesoamerica, discussed in the second chapter, highlights more dispersed processes but a similar epistemological issue. The hybrid character of religious practices in the Americas eluded not only the Spaniards but also later knowledge of these events. Syncretism, as a way of thinking, becomes symptomatic here of cultural interactions that operated on a subconscious level, sheltered by architecture and the arts. The colonizers attempted to exploit what they considered to be the language of indigenous forms, but actually limited their engagement only to what they could control. Although the Spaniards did not intend to admit pagan imports into their teachings, architecture, and art, their narrow-mindedness and arrogance prompted them to dismiss as irrelevant anything that was not explicitly figurative or message-like. At the same time, complexity, ambiguity, and contradictions were inherently meaningful in earlier Mesoamerica. The Spanish system of symbolic communication and the pre-Hispanic modality of evocative thought have coexisted, operating on different levels, never intersecting theologically but frequently occupying the same material environments.

The third chapter addresses issues of domination, identified not as political or military suppression but rather as the elimination of critical content from visual representation. The shift from a modality of thought characterizing the Reformation

to that of the Counter-Reformation in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, hinges on representation of the relationship between power and religion. The Jesuits initially attempted to counterbalance a politically subversive character of Protestant representations of order only to learn that, instead of fighting rebellious ways of thinking, it was more productive to redirect believers' fascinations. Thus the chapter shows how the Society of Jesus appropriated—removed the ideological content and used—prevalent interests in visual experimentation. Artists of the Catholic baroque produced an array of formal compositions, which were as dazzling as they were devoid of a critical attitude. By appropriating the Reformation's artistic sensitivity and associating its initial characteristics with meaningless mannerisms, the forces of the Counter-Reformation disarmed, or rather erased from perception, the critical ideas of their opponents. In that way the manifestations of power relationships in religion became imperceptible. The fact that representations produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries embodied critical or repressive aspects has not only been eliminated from debates of that time but remains absent in the current knowledge of architecture.

The chapters on Victorian England and early modernism in architecture uncover practices that produced a modality of thought characteristic of the culture of consumerism. Examples show a dual process in which (1) forces of capitalism generated representational experimentation in architecture and visual practices that transformed common modes of thinking and perceiving and (2) verbal discourses provided comfort to people unsettled by the speed and magnitude of these changes. Such narratives, especially those of religious dogma and social conventions, seemingly sustained traditional value systems and an illusion that high culture and good intentions are immune to commercial interests. This process profoundly reconstituted perception and produced the ductility of thought that architects of high modernism, like Le Corbusier, used to position themselves. In the world of symbolic flows and shifts, they became the ultimate authority of imagination and order. And the process continues.

1 Architecture and Medieval Modalities of Thought

Michel Foucault once asked: "What does it mean, no longer being able to think a certain thought?"[1] Such a question directly applies to Byzantine architecture. Its best-preserved examples, such as Hagia Sophia in Istanbul or the Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas near Delphi, seemingly belong to the traditional canon of the Western history. They are frequently featured in books about architecture of the medieval ages. Yet, in general, Byzantine art occupies a peculiar place in that history. As the legacy of classical Greece and Rome, Byzantium is considered European, but not entirely. Iconoclasm epitomizes the worst aspects of the period traditionally called the Dark Ages. In such a view, Byzantium seems to have been an inferior outcome of Greek ideals or Roman ingenuity. Even the ways of knowing Byzantine and Western architecture are different. The knowledge of Byzantine buildings and art seems less epistemologically integrated than that of Romanesque, and especially Gothic. In a proper Gothic cathedral, the means of expression and symbolic messages appear closely interconnected. Not only the nominal categories but also the most ephemeral observations concerning an experience of a Gothic church seem to resonate with some already-known theological or philosophical texts of medieval times. As a well-explained fragment of European history, a Gothic cathedral is a living part of the European sense of identity while Byzantine churches remain strangely exotic.[2] The most thorough studies of that architecture, for example Robert Ousterhout's *Master Builders of Byzantium,* are highly reductive—they rely on the typological classification of buildings' material form, technical knowledge of construction, and liturgical program.[3] However, aspects of Eastern churches that tend to escape Western models of interpretation fascinated and engaged European imagination the most.

One way of looking at this puzzling phenomenon would be to attribute it to the fact that many more documents survived in the West, and they relate to architecture more directly than those of the European East. Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* is a good example of that kind of an argument, and it exemplifies the epistemologically self-sufficient character of such approaches.[4] Since the appearance of Panofsky's influential study in 1951, Gothic architecture has been frequently interpreted as the material outcome

of Scholasticism. However, the scholarly method that Panofsky uses itself follows the Scholastic mode of thought. The way Panofsky constructs his argument parallels the two principles of Scholasticism: *manifestatio* and *concordantia*. Manifestatio, according to Panofsky, was aimed at the "elucidation or clarification" of thought as it manifests itself within "the completeness, self-sufficiency, and limitedness of a system of thought." Alternately, concordantia was aimed at finding a concordance or solution to any conflict of symbolic meaning through the "acceptance and ultimate reconciliation of contradictory possibilities."[5] Although Panofsky recognizes the importance of different ideas in the formation of Gothic architecture, he discusses them only to show how they were reconciled.[6] Thus, if the logocentric construct of Scholasticism served as an intellectual blueprint—it systematically formed (manifestatio), freed of contradictions (concordantia), and directed the design of Gothic churches—definitely the same principles of structuring thought guide Panofsky's arguments. As a result, how Panofsky studies his object of inquiry predetermines his conclusions. In such inquiries, Gothic architecture will always appear superior to the other kinds of architecture of the time. This kind of practice has been so omnipresent in the West that only recent scholarship acknowledges that some elemental aspects of Byzantine art remain overlooked.[7]

This chapter argues that even buildings that seem well known remain insufficiently explored; their features that have escaped scholarly insights coincide with operations of those epistemological mechanisms that have filtered reality for political reasons. Such bias reflects more than just a lack of sufficient information. It reveals how the thinkability and unthinkability of certain symbolic thoughts have been constructed and built into power relationships since the Middle Ages in Europe. Middle Byzantine architecture provides an emblematic example of how certain fundamental aspects of that architecture have been overlooked by Western epistemology. The most important among them is the way buildings materialized a post-iconoclastic notion of the representation of the divine. That complex issue was always central to Byzantine theology. It led to iconoclasm but then found its fullest manifestation in architecture. Churches like Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas moved beyond political restrictions of iconoclastic arguments and employed light, solid matter, and space to deal with that issue. Architecture did not resolve old controversies, but by accepting their paradoxical nature, represented them as a unique way of thinking about the divine presence. Later then, another kind of architecture—Gothic—and new political forces silenced that uniquely Byzantine way of thinking for centuries to come.[8]

Icon and the Iconoclastic Controversy

The controversy concerning truth in representation of the divine led to its political outcome, iconoclasm.[9] Between 726 and 843, the Byzantine empire prohibited the representational depiction of the divine as a violation of the spirituality of worship, thus banning all figurative imagery in churches. In 754, the so-called Iconoclastic Council in Hiereia, proclaiming that the divine nature is completely uncircumscribable and cannot be depicted or represented by artists in any medium whatsoever, caused the rampant destruction of art that has given the iconoclastic controversy its negative place in history. The theological and philosophical ideas surrounding the iconoclastic controversy, however, were much more complex than this political expression suggests.

In *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea,* Moshe Barasch traces certain aspects of the iconoclastic controversy to the Neoplatonic thought of Plotinus (204–270) that gave symbolic prominence to visual experience and to its early Christian counterparts in the writings of Tertullian (150–225) and Origen (182–251), who also argued against visual religious representation.[10] It was, however, an anonymous writer of the early sixth century who has become known as Pseudo-Dionysius, or Dionysius the Areopagite, who turned the representation of the divine into a philosophical issue.

His *Corpus Areopagiticum* is concerned with ambiguity and contradiction in theology. Central to his thinking was the idea of the negative theology, that is, the notion that God is

> known in all things and as distinct from all things. *He is known through knowledge and through unknowing.* Of him there is conception, reason, understanding, touch, perception, opinion, imagination, name, and many other things. On the other hand he cannot be understood, words cannot contain him, and no name can lay hold of him. He is not one of the things that are and he cannot be known in any of them. He is all things in all things and he is no thing among things. He is known to all from all things and he is known to no one from anything.[11]

This apparent set of contradictions raises questions about the possibility of representational naming, of giving a corporeal representational shape to the divine: "just as the senses can neither grasp nor perceive the things of the mind, just as representation and shape cannot lay hold of the intangible and incorporeal, by the same standard of truth beings are surpassed by the infinity beyond being, intelligences by that oneness which is beyond intelligence."[12] And yet, in the following passage, Pseudo-Dionysius holds that "God is not absolutely

incommunicable to everything. By itself it generously reveals a firm, transcendent beam, granting enlightenments proportionate to each being, and thereby draws sacred minds upward to its permitted contemplation, to participation and to the state of becoming like it." The sacred minds, therefore, "are raised firmly and unswervingly upward in the direction of the ray which enlightens them."[13] Thus, Pseudo-Dionysius asserts, knowing and representing the divine go beyond the capabilities of human thought and of material means. At the same time, divine benevolence offers the possibility of narrowing the gap separating the two domains and of allowing some limited human understanding. In his efforts to reach this state, Pseudo-Dionysius pointed out the divine presence in the complexity of thought and in thought's interaction with the world ("of him there is conception, reason, understanding, touch, perception, opinion, imagination, name"). Pseudo-Dionysius also accepted paradox as his mode of inquiry. The exploration of how conflicting statements coexist was for him the way to study divinity, and this is reflected in his theological discourse. On the one hand, Pseudo-Dionysius disturbs the sense of closure within rational thought by juxtaposing seemingly contradictory logocentric meanings—"knowing through unknowing," for example. On the other hand, he resorts to the language of metaphor, when he implies a divine intervention into the human world, evoking analogies of spatial or visual phenomena, for example, "drawing upward" and "the ray which enlightens."[14]

Pseudo-Dionysius extensively discusses two other issues that have particular application to my analysis of Byzantine architecture. The first is the issue of hierarchy. In his writing, hierarchy is the expression of a gradual transition, of the graded passing from the domain of the divine to the domain of the mortals.[15] The theological importance of such a concept cannot be overstated. In a deeply divided universe, hierarchy allows the possibility of bridging the two contradictory realities, acting as a site for God's symbolic descent and for the symbolic ascent of the human mind.[16] This process is accomplished not through the reconciliation of opposites, but through revealing the symbolic value in the contradictions. Without losing the power of its symbolic tension, the coexistence of two contradictory realities was presented as a relationship that could be structured by its intermediate conditions, by the sites that negotiated the paradox.

The second topic of special interest is Pseudo-Dionysius's doctrine of symbols. His writing makes multiple references to the *Symbolic Theology*, his lost comprehensive treatment of the subject. Pseudo-Dionysius used the term *symbolon,* whose meaning, as Barasch points out, is similar to the contemporary meaning of the French or English word "symbol," but it differs in a way that is important for this study. After studying many scattered and

fragmentary observations concerning this doctrine, Barasch asserts that "in the context of Dionysian theology the function of the symbol is to overcome the contrast between God's transcendence and the hierarchy that links God to the material world."[17] It is possible because, as Barasch suggests, unlike the contemporary meaning of the word symbol, which tends to "emphasize the gap between the object (or form) that serves as symbol and the idea (or other content) that is to be symbolized . . . in Dionysian thought, the *symbolon,* while never negating the difference between symbol and symbolized, represents mainly what they have in common. Symbolon, in his view, is not only a sign but is actually the thing itself."[18] Dionysian thoughts on contemplation as enlightenment—bringing divine light to the human mind—are an especially important example of this concept.[19] The divine light is referred to in terms of familiar characteristics—as a physical phenomenon—and as a powerful and multifaceted symbol. Light represents divine benevolence and wisdom for Pseudo-Dionysius, as in his claim that God "pours out on everyone the shining beams of his inspired teaching."[20] Such light is presented as capable of a symbolic guidance. Seeing that which is revealed, therefore, goes beyond the literal act of looking. Intelligence—thinking itself—is defined metaphorically as the eye, as a receptacle of divine signs.[21]

In contrast, during the time of iconoclasm, the iconoclastic doctrine that was used to justify the iconoclastic law was constructed to turn the representation of the divine into a univocal symbolic issue, bringing to the fore the easiest to control aspect of representation, the figurative depiction of the divine. It is the very nature of figurative depiction to secure certainty, to allow a depicted figure to be easily recognized and univocally interpreted.[22] Rather than exploring Dionysian thoughts about how or whether it was possible to think the unthinkable, theologians and politicians attempted to reduce the problem of depicting the divine to a set of elemental symbolic categories about which they could argue in terms of whether or not a representation of the divine can be justified. The defenders of images developed the so-called Christological argument, in which they interpreted the Incarnation as a precedent for the representation of the divine prototype; that is, Christ was a material and figurative representation of God the Father. Another example of an explanation for the rectitude of using images was based on their symbolic usefulness. Following the teachings of Pope Gregory the Great that images are like books for illiterate believers, the defenders of images argued that the value of an image was in its didactic function.[23] Because the major issue became not modes of thinking but correctness of interpretation, theologians and politicians attempted to ground their arguments on a stronger authority than their opponents. These attempts became so numerous that Edward James Martin devotes an entire

chapter of his *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* to recording the various authorities and reasons behind their arguments.[24] Consequently, at the time, the iconoclastic controversy was shifted away from what it meant to represent and instead became focused on whether or not to represent the divine. When simplified in this way, the questions concerning truth or value in representation became, in Martin's words, "a political weapon rather than a debatable problem."[25] After a century of political decline, "strong, successful rule had come to be associated with the absence of images."[26]

One thinker of the time whose writing did reflect some of the earlier complexity of Dionysian discourse was Saint John of Damascus (675–749). As Peter Brown points out, John of Damascus, known as Mansur ibn Sarjun during his time as a civil servant at the Arab court, had studied two different symbolic ideologies—the Christian and the Muslim—which may account for his ability to deal with contradictions and complexities of thought and meaning without resorting to reductive processes.[27] In his *On the Divine Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images,* John of Damascus redefines Dionysian paradoxes in direct reference to the material world. On multiple occasions, he glorifies the symbolic function of matter, giving as examples the material dimension of holy signs described in the New Testament as well as the materiality of the Gospel book itself.[28] Most informative for our understanding of Byzantine architecture are his observations concerning matter and light. For instance, he discusses shadows cast by objects as the extensions of these objects; this is why, he argues, shadows cast by the bodies of saints possess special powers.[29] Elsewhere, following the Christological argument, he argues that the materiality of the human body is a "fleshy veil" that covers the soul. Consequently, although thoughts are immaterial, this means that "it is impossible to think without using physical images."[30] Moreover, he treats looking itself as a major symbolic issue. Metaphorically equating an icon with a dark glass, he draws an analogy between looking directly into the light of the sun through a dark glass and viewing the icon's representation of the divine; in both cases, a limited physical or symbolic transparency mediates irreconcilable differences.[31] In this way, bodily sight gains a new significance for John of Damascus, who argues that it is only "by using bodily sight [that] we reach spiritual contemplation."[32]

In Byzantine churches, the relationships between figurative mosaics and architectural form have long been acknowledged as being especially important for the symbolic functioning of these buildings. In *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium,* classical by now but still one of the most important studies of these relationships,

Otto Demus asserts that "the Byzantine church itself is the 'picture-space' of the icons"; thus, "it is the ideal iconostasis."[33] Later, other scholars argued that the symbolic program—that is, the reasoning behind the choice of subject and placement of images in the space of a Byzantine church—served as the basis for an icon in general.[34] Demus proposes three systems of symbolic meaning operating within a Byzantine church. First, a church is "an image of the Kosmos, symbolizing heaven, paradise . . . and the terrestrial world in an ordered hierarchy." Second, "the building is conceived as the image of . . . the places sanctified by Christ's earthly life."[35] Third, the building becomes the symbolic "Calendar of the Christian year," in which "icons are arranged in accordance with liturgical sequence of the ecclesiastical festivals."[36]

Such an approach to interpreting Byzantine symbolic space is insufficient. Demus oversimplifies many symbolic issues, among them that of light, when he discusses it in terms of an economy of architectural means used to produce rich coloristic effects.[37] He merely follows the logic of his general system of interpreting a church as an ideal iconostasis when he equates the richness of visual effects, the high degree of visibility, and the correctness of perceived figures with symbolic value. As in the case of Panofsky's studies of Gothic architecture, Demus's conclusions are foregone as a result of the epistemological structure he uses because his study is as much about interpreting signs as it is about affirming his systems of interpretation.[38] This kind of approach to the symbolic functioning of Byzantine church decorations has already been criticized by writers like Thomas F. Mathews, who not only points out inconsistencies in the interpretative logic of the festival cycle and/or of the topography of the Holy Land, but also, and most importantly, says that in a Byzantine church "the believer entered a world of images in a way the modern viewer of paintings cannot accomplish."[39] Many historians overlook the fact that the constitution of the Byzantine space of representation goes far beyond figurative images and symbolic narratives. To expand my field of inquiry, I distinguish between *figurative* and *nonfigurative* representation. Figurative representation assures that a depicted form is recognizable as an appearance of something known from physical reality or as a figural form commonly associated with a particular interpretation.[40] The concept of nonfigurative representation refers to the mode of representation that establishes the relationships between given material forms or visual phenomena and symbolic reality without resorting to specific figures and familiar appearances. This seemingly esoteric concept of nonfigurative representation is related to the Dionysian concept of dissimilar similarity and is essential for the understanding of sacral architecture from the Middle Byzantine period.[41]

The Katholikon in the Monastery of Hosios Loukas

The Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas is the only Middle Byzantine church in which both the building and the interior decoration are relatively well preserved.[42] It was built in Greece around the third quarter of the tenth or the first quarter of the eleventh century.[43] The monastery was an important center of a healing cult associated with Saint Luke (whose material remains are still preserved in the crypt).[44] But it is more than its completeness or religious designation that, according to Byzantine scholars, makes Hosios Loukas "the most important Byzantine monument to have survived in Greece."[45] In the Katholikon, the phenomena of light, matter, and space operated as nonfigurative representation, making the divine presence thinkable in a way specific to the post-iconoclastic Byzantine modality of religious imagination.

In *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium,* Demus focuses on the uniquely Byzantine aspect of the relationship between architecture and mosaics. He discusses the church of Hosios Loukas and another one built in Daphni, Greece, around 1080–1100, to draw attention to ways in which physical space in those buildings interacts representationally with a depicted space. Such interactions between figurative mosaics, especially when hieratically frontal, and empty physical space create what he calls "magical presence." "The fact that the frontal figures surround the room on all sides makes the empty space in the middle seem their real domain."[46]

In Hosios Loukas, one of the most intriguing examples of such a phenomenon is the one constructed in the second zone of church decorations dedicated to the life of Christ. Pictures positioned in the squinches of the naos show holy events in a nonhieratic manner but are composed in such a way that the depicted space explicitly doubles the physical space.[47]

Figure 1.1 shows the Nativity, a mosaic located in the southeastern squinch of the Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas. According to Demus: "In the Nativity, the concave landscape with the open cave in the center is adequately fitted to the physical cavity of the niche in which it is placed. The adoring Angels bow in the most actual sense to the Child, who, in the center of the composition, is sheltered and surrounded by all the other forms and figures."[48] Not only the Nativity but all other mosaics placed in the squinches in both churches, the Annunciation, Baptism, Presentation, and Transfiguration, use a squinch to fold these two kinds of spaces together. Demus sees this manipulation of space as creation of "the 'spatial' icon" that allows depicted scenes to "take on an air of spatial reality," thus suggesting that the magic of this presentation is in the three-dimensional impression made of surfaces covered with mosaics.[49]

Figure 1.1

However, the void space in front of the mosaic has a quality that I have called nonfigurative representation. That is to say, while remaining empty and amorphous, the physical void space of a squinch acquires a degree of concreteness, materiality, and tactility.[50] And this very process of solidifying the physical void space allows this space to represent a holy site in a nonfigurative manner. Squinches or domes make this symbolic process more perceivable by heightening the interactions between a figurative depiction and the void space. The same space and the same symbolic process extend into the whole interior of the church. By simply being present in the church, a believer becomes a part of this "sacralized space."[51]

This symbolic transformation of the void space is only one of many aspects of how Byzantine churches establish their unique space of representation. Light is another and maybe the most significant one. Even though pictures showing the unusual quality of daylight at Hosios Loukas have appeared on covers of books devoted to the history of Byzantine architecture (for example in Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture),* the relationship between the light and the building's form has not yet been adequately analyzed. The interior of Hosios Loukas is filled with light that can best be

Figure 1.2

described as emanating from the windows and the walls and occupying the least expected places. Figure 1.2 shows a view that one experiences upon entering the interior. Daylight usually comes through windows, the transparent or perforated elements on the outermost edge of a building. Paradoxically, however, at Hosios Loukas it also comes from places where the material form of the building would seem to be the deepest. Light unexpectedly emerges from these inner spaces through small openings on the second level, arched semi-windows divided by a slender column. These openings reveal galleries—spaces used by the monks—that seem to capture so much daylight that their brightness visually competes with that coming directly through the regular windows. This reversal of what is expected draws one's attention.

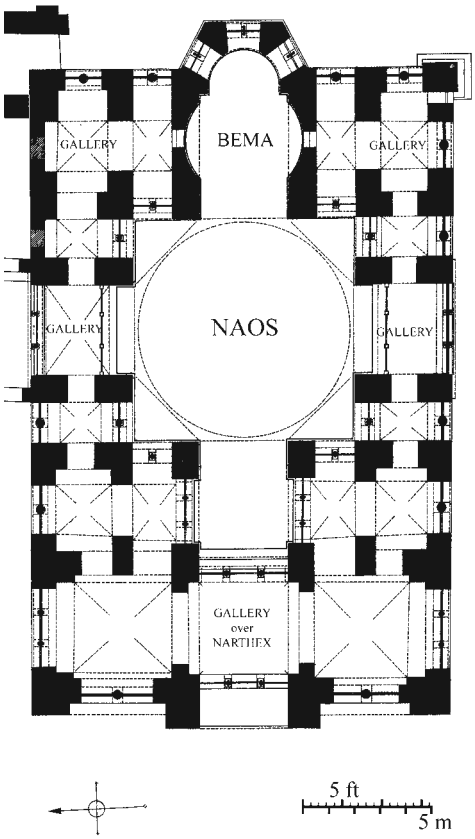


Figure 1.3

The visual phenomenon is a consequence of a particular design. As can be seen on the plan of the second floor (Figure 1.3), the naos is surrounded by a border of complex structures forming what I would call a porous shell. There are two kinds of spaces within the shell. First, there are the volumes extending the central space of the naos, such as the two transepts and the bema.[52] These spaces make the exterior wall of the building visible from the naos. The space of the bema and the perforated wall that closes it can be seen in the center of Figure 1.2. Second, there are the volumes within the shell. These spaces are much more enclosed, like rooms, and are open to the core of the naos only through small arched openings, those that are visible on both sides of the bema in Figure 1.2.

In the whole church, spaces adjacent to exterior walls have windows that open to the outside. As Figure 1.7 shows, their upper parts are filled with ceramic screens punctured by small but multiple round apertures. Lower parts of the window openings are filled with thin slabs made of white marble. The relationship of these elements, however, differs between the ground level and the gallery level. On the ground, the screen and the slab are directly

adjacent to one another, but on the gallery these elements are separated by large rectangular openings, here referred to as gap windows.[53] These gap windows, today filled with casement steel frames and glazed, cannot be seen from the floor of the naos but serve as the primary source of light entering the gallery spaces, making those rooms unexpectedly appear as if they were glowing from within.[54]

It appears that this manipulation of daylight was even more nuanced in the past. In 1901, Robert Schultz and Sidney Barnsley published their comprehensive study of the monastery of Hosios Loukas in which they carefully described windows. Based on the condition of Hosios Loukas at that time, before a more recent restoration, they suggest that the gap windows might have been operable by a set of shutters made of very thin slabs of marble.[55] Moreover, Schultz and Barnsley describe a few remaining "pieces of strongly coloured glass . . . such as blue, red, and orange" that had been used to fill apertures in the perforated screens.[56] Although they treat these window screens as merely primitive predecessors of Gothic stained-glass windows, they note that such a composition could resemble "a semi-transparent colour mosaic."[57]

In considering the symbolic functioning of this church, information about the original construction of windows is important. When the small apertures of the window screens were glazed with pieces of intensely colored or semitransparent—thus dark—glass, and the larger gap windows were either completely opened or closed by thin slabs of stone, the interior would have been darker than in Figure 1.2, as today all these openings are glazed with regularly cleaned, colorless, and fully transparent glass.[58] Like mosaics, the screens with the colored glass must have glittered with sparkles of intense color. The intensity and kind of light transmitted by the colored glass or reflected by the mosaics would have been similar and this would have helped to visually blend window screens with surfaces reflecting the light.[59] Only the gap windows, when the shutters were opened, would have created bright (though hidden) sources of light. Consequently, the view in Figure 1.2 is quite different from what a person would have seen in the past. Today, the interior is both much brighter and visually fragmented by multiple and competing bright spots, be it those created by clear-glass apertures or by their reflections in the highly polished surfaces around them.

When the interior was darker, other and much more subtle phenomena were noticeable. Among them, maybe the most evocative were stones that literally emanated light. It is telling that, despite the fact that marble panels in the Katholikon still do transmit a little bit of light, the construction and symbolic function of this unique phenomenon have been overlooked by the history of architecture. For many visitors, even when observed, such phenomena

probably fall into a generic category of "interesting effects," forgettable because no commonly known symbolic narrative awaits to make them meaningful.

Schultz and Barnsley carefully measured the carved marble panels placed at the bottoms of window openings and concluded that they are, on average, about one and three-quarter inches thick. In some places, however, they are carved out to only half an inch thick. The white marble is semi-translucent and even today, despite the artificially high intensity of the light in the interior, the difference of light levels between the interior and the exterior is sufficient to reveal daylight transmitted through the marble. This is why, as Schultz and Barnsley noted, the Greeks call these translucent slabs *phengites,* "The Gleaming Stone."[60]

Figures 1.4a and 1.4b

These window panels are treated differently on each side: symbolic signs and decorative motifs are precisely carved into the exterior surfaces, while the surfaces exposed to the interior of the church are flat and roughly finished. Figure 1.4a shows how, on a sunny day, when seen from the interior, one of these stone panels reveals its compositions as warm, earth-colored spots of transmitted light. Like the Dionysian concept of dissimilar similarity, this image is both similar to and different from the form carved on the exterior surface. As if inviting a person to consider the symbolic value in a degree of discernability, the same decorative motif appears on the translucent slabs located at the interior edge of what I have called the porous shell, in the balustrades surrounding the naos. Some of these slabs can be seen in Figure 1.2. Figure 1.4b shows how one of these gallery balustrades looks on a sunny day. Light enters the panel from the gallery side and emerges on the naos side, causing the panel

to delicately glow with the same warm, earth-colored light described earlier. This time, however, the sculpted side of the panel faces the interior, and the same shape that was vaguely discernable on Figure 1.4a now appears vividly highlighted by the brightness of its deeply curved relief. Moreover, this awareness that light and the thickness of the marble make some areas more and others less visible creates an impression that all stones may be infused with light and that, paradoxically, any slab of stone could transmit this inner light (if only thin enough).[61] Since the balustrades are on the inner edge of the porous shell, the visual phenomenon of light emerging from the depths of the solid matter right below small arched openings reinforces the impression that intense light seems to be captured within the galleries, that they are made of an unusual mixture of physical matter and bright light.

The building appears to have been deliberately designed to do exactly that: to capture, condense, and hold daylight. Certain essential aspects of its geometric form and the optical properties of its finishes were designed to control the distribution of light energy and the degree to which its presence was revealed to a believer. Galleries have always captured much more light than the main body of the naos. Plate 1 shows an analytical depiction of how this phenomenon was constructed. The image includes a plan view, similar to that of Figure 1.3, showing a record of light on a horizontal plane positioned slightly below the tops of gallery balustrades. It shows how light was distributed in the past, before the windows were altered. This kind of analytical depiction and some other figures in this chapter were produced with the help of a digital technique that uses a virtual model of the church and a set of simulated planes cutting the interior to record, as on a photographic film, the intensity of light crossing the empty space. Because these planes are virtual, they (unlike film) register light without altering its movement. The model of the church was based not only on information provided by Schultz and Barnsley about the church geometry, but also on site-collected data.[62] This analog depiction reveals that the inner edge of the porous shell was a border between space filled with intense light, on the side of galleries, and the much darker space of the naos. It was exactly this difference on the two sides of the phengites, mounted into the gallery balustrades, that made them glow into the center of the church. The difference and thus the glowing effect was always strongest on the side of the church from which the sun was shining (e.g., east in the morning).[63]

This construction of light phenomena in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas was ingenious and deliberate. The distribution of light shown in Plate 1 resulted from the location and transparency of windows, as well as the overall shape of the interior. It was also produced by optical properties of finishes in the porous shell and the naos. Today, most surfaces within the galleries are covered with light-yellowish stucco, while walls of the naos are dark because

Figure 1.5

they are still enveloped in the veneer of smooth slabs of stones. This brightness of gallery surfaces adds to the contrast in and around small arched openings in Figure 1.2. In the past, the enclosed spaces of the gallery captured daylight, but their visible fragments looked different. Their surfaces were designed to support the bouncing of light but not to overtly reveal how this entrapment of daylight energy actually happens. Figure 1.5 shows remnants of two kinds of finishes in the southeast gallery, matte but relatively light below and painted surfaces above. The gallery floors are made of matte light-colored stones. The band of wall surfaces adjacent to them, but below the height of the railing of the balustrades, was made of untreated stucco resembling floors. Light-colored and matte surfaces reflect a high percentage of light energy, but in the process of doing so they appear bright. In Hosios Loukas these surfaces were hidden from the view of a person standing in the naos and even from a person on the gallery level looking across the naos. Beams of direct sunlight entering via the gap windows would hit these lighter surfaces or move across them during the day and the high percentage of their light energy would be evenly dispersed in the space of the galleries.[64] Surfaces above—vertical walls and vaulted ceilings—were painted with colors resembling polished stones. Due to their finishes, they also bounced a lot of light energy back into space, but they operated like imperfect mirrors—their smooth surfaces reflected specular light without appearing bright. This physical phenomenon is exemplified by that part of Figure 1.5 where the intense light causes the floor and adjacent wall to look almost white while painted surfaces next to them remain dark. These decorated surfaces were the ones that believers could see. Most of the painted patterns in the gallery are gone today, but remaining fragments reveal a consistency in this design.

Figure 1.2 is far from the original condition. The current matte and light-yellowish stucco that covers most walls and the vaulted ceiling in the galleries appears excessively bright. The reason for controlling visible differences of brightness in the past was to create a muted environment—to help a believer contemplate the visual phenomena.

Plates 2a and 2b show two views of the same fragment of the Katholikon. The one on the left, Plate 2a, is a photograph taken in 1997. The one on the right, Plate 2b, is a simulated view of the church interior showing the way it probably looked in the past.[65] Altogether, the

digital image reveals that the interior was not just darker; rather, its dynamic range of visible contrast was precisely controlled. The biggest difference of lighting conditions between the contemporary photographs and the simulated image is in places where surfaces visible from the naos are directly adjacent to windows, for example in the bema shown on the left side of Plates 2a and 2b. Small arched openings in Plate 2b still stand out as brighter fragments of the view, but visible fragments of galleries are slightly darker than the same surfaces in Plate 2a.[66] It is the overall darkness of the church interior that makes them appear relatively bright. Gallery walls and vaults would appear even darker if their painted pattern was known and fully texture-mapped in the digital model.

This play of muted appearances is characteristic of the way the perception of subtle effects was constructed in the original version of the church. The lower contrast in Plate 2b highlights multiple cases of gleaming stones, including balustrade panels located right below the small arched openings. Figure 1.4b shows one of them the way it looks now, but it was necessary to use the telephoto lens and to frame the image including only darker surfaces in the gallery (otherwise the contrast would be too high for a photographic film). In the past, these gleaming effects might have been much easier to observe.

Plate 2b also shows, on the left side, a curved wall with a vertical gleaming panel in its center. On the plan of the second floor (Figure 1.3), the southern and northern edge of the bema is defined by two such shallow cylindrical niches. They thin out the depths of the walls. In Figure 1.3, the glowing panels are located where a double line closes narrow openings connecting the space of the bema with a room on the gallery level. Figure 1.5 shows this narrow opening viewed from the southern gallery, and the surface closing it is the same marble panel that glows in Plate 2b.[67] Today, as Plate 2a shows, the panel almost blends visually with the stone veneer surrounding it. The analytical study of light in the galleries (Plate 1) revealed that, in the past, the morning light created the biggest difference exactly between the bema and adjacent galleries, which was the reason why the vertical panels of marble transmitted light so vividly.

These vertical gleaming panels played a particular representational role in the church: they blended figurative and nonfigurative representation. The vertical panels appeared more mysterious and evocative than the other phengites. Although slabs of marble installed in windows and balustrades also transmitted light, they functioned differently. To a degree, they allowed this light effect to be understood as a physical phenomenon because in each case the effect of gleaming and the actual source of daylight were simultaneously revealed. Thus, it was easy to think about them as pieces of stone with special optical characteristics.

In contrast, the gleaming panels of the bema seemed physically less real or rationally explainable. The whole solid wall of the building seemed thinned out, and right in the deepest part of such a niche the wall transmitted light from within. These mysterious phengites are explicitly aligned with figurative representations. They are positioned in such a way that they look like the glowing bodies of two saints partially depicted right above them: Athanasius, visible in Plate 2a, and Gregory of Nazianzus on the other side of the bema. The ideas of those holy men played a significant role in the iconoclastic controversy.[68] This mixture of figurative and nonfigurative representation creates an overt connection between theological discourses concerning light as representation of the divine presence and the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas as the embodiment of such issues.

While this clearly articulated composition overlooked the bema, the main space of the church offered a very different, yet maybe the most important, case of nonfigurative representation. It was as evocative as it was ambiguous and subtle. Byzantine references to such esoteric phenomena inspired and puzzled historians.[69] For example, Procopius, writing about Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, noted that "one might say that its interior is not illuminated from without by the sun, but that the radiance comes into being within it."[70] Indeed, the gold-covered domes with their ring of windows—an emblem of Byzantine churches after Hagia Sophia—were designed to produce such impressions.

Plate 3 shows another analytical depiction of the church. The light-recording planes are shown in approximately isometric view. One of them cuts across the church vertically, through its longitudinal center, and the other horizontally, more or less one meter above the floor of the naos. Because the image shows the distribution of light in the whole volume of the naos, it reveals that, in the past, the light was brightest within the dome. A believer moving across the naos would be surrounded by much less intense light. Unfiltered or direct sunlight could never reach the floor. Although vivid when depicted by digital technology, this visual phenomenon is extremely difficult to grasp in the actual physical space. Only indirect perceptual clues would imply the existence of the volume of light. Some of them appear in Plate 2b, where walls of the naos of the second floor—those surrounding small arched openings—show a yellowish tint and are brighter than the surfaces below. They have registered the intensity of the volume of light and, to a degree, also reflected the glittering effects of the gold-covered dome. A person standing on the ground floor could only sense what Plate 3 shows figuratively.

Light represented divine qualities because the presence of light is revealed only as an after-effect—we do not see the light, but only the way it transforms materials. Light itself is

invisible. Such energy must be absorbed, and only then material surfaces indicate its operation. Light cannot be seen when it passes through empty space or when it hits a perfectly reflective surface. A mirror does not absorb light, and thus its surface dissolves optically like empty space. While looking at the mirror we only see reflected objects as if they existed on the other side of that dematerialized plane. The interior of the main dome at Hosios Loukas was empty and its surfaces covered with gilded mosaics, which functioned like a crude concave mirror. Consequently, all that light which was coming from the ring of windows at the top of the naos and from the hidden openings in the galleries kept bouncing within the space of the dome. Plate 3 shows that multiplicity of rays crossing the top part of the naos. Because it would be absorbed by much less reflective stone surfaces, only a small percentage of this energy would reach to the floor.

Without even analyzing the actual light phenomena in Byzantine churches, Mathews says:

> The Byzantine church was a very special kind of space laid out in rigorous centrality around a vertical well of light under the cup of the dome. The dome defined a magical space in which one encountered the divine. Here the worshipper found himself at the very center of creation, encompassed with the saints, ringed around with the example of Christ's life, and on direct axis with his Lord overhead. One did not enter this space to work out puzzles in iconography but to be transformed or transported.[71]

Such a transformation was uniquely grounded in visual phenomena and nonverbal constructs of thought. While standing on the floor and looking from the darker area into the implied volume of lightness, a person could see some light directly reflected by the gold leaf and glittering caused by imperfections in the glass of tesserae covering the dome. To a certain degree, the presence of this volume of light was always revealed when an interior was filled with smoke and the empty space physically gained material/optical density, for example during the Divine Liturgy.[72] The illusive and nonfigurative character of these phenomena, or paradoxical impressions they trigger in one's mind, are reminiscent of the Dionysian concept of hierarchy, implying that the physical space of the naos is a meeting place of something that can be touched and understood—the realm of mortals—and something that cannot be reached or explained—the realm of divine beings. Only the human mind, or rather imagination, might have been transported closer to that superior realm. In Hosios Loukas the unreachable divine light is juxtaposed against the tactility of stone-covered

surfaces and human space filled with dim light.[73] Together, they represent the tension that exists between the two irreconcilable domains of experiences. The threshold between the two was the most undetermined. As Plate 3 shows, the intensity of light between the top and the bottom of the naos was substantial. Yet, the transition between the two parts is extremely vague. This perceptual environment confronted a person with something that can be neither ignored nor explained. Even if the Katholikon was fully restored to its initial condition, with all its windows and gilded tesserae on the dome, this phenomenon could never be captured by a photograph.

Color and especially color of light played a key role in these representational explorations of divinity. The Greek word λευκός had three meanings: "what an object emits or reflects of light; the transparency through which light passes; the object colour white."[74] Such a definition already implies a profound difference between contemporary, scientifically based definitions of light phenomena and the ancient way of thinking about them. In her *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art,* Liz James specifically explores the relationship between light and color. Many of her findings about the Byzantine concept of color seem to anticipate the experiential phenomena of the Katholikon.[75] Thus, unlike the scientifically objective Western concept of hue, the Byzantine notion of color was primarily focused on perceptual complexity in the perception of color phenomena.[76] The way we see colors is relative and depends on multiple factors such as optical solidity of the material producing the sensation, reflectivity and texture of a lit surface, the relationship of the color of light and the inherent color of surface, other colors and their brightness within the same field of vision, and even time—how long a person has been observing that color.[77] The Katholikon, as the apparatus designed to explore perception, highlighted those issues. Its interior finishes sample a broad and nuanced spectrum of colors, materials, and their discernability. One color, however, was much more present in the whole interior. The comparison of Plates 2a and 2b shows that the light captured under the dome and colored by gold in tesserae flooded the space. Gold, the most precious metal and the paradigm of purity, was a sign of light and divinity in the writings of St. Basil and Pseudo-Dionysius.[78] It "does not rust, decompose, or wear and can be beaten to the fineness of air. Gold was used to invoke the transcendental nature of the Incarnate Christ."[79] In the Katholikon, believers standing in the naos could probably perceive that the effects of the goldish light resembled earth-colored spots marking phengites. A person could see subtle change in the appearance of his or her clothes or complexion. Moreover, when a source of light is large and surrounds an object, shadows and especially their edges become soft, as if light were coming from almost any direction. This omnipresence of golden light

Figure 1.6

revealed that the empty space acquired a degree of tactility, like that of light-holding phengites. The moment believers acknowledged the paradoxical nature of these phenomena, they were ready to consider the Christological argument—the key issue of the iconoclastic controversy. Actually, they were explicitly prompted to think about the body of Christ as a representational veil and how the building resembled it.

In many Byzantine churches, at the very top of the dome, above the tacit volume of light, one can see a mosaic depiction of Christ Pantokrator. He "always carries a codex, it is in his left hand, and when it is open it shows the text: 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"[80] In the Katholikon, that mosaic was destroyed long ago by an earthquake and is replaced now by a seventeenth-century painting. Figure 1.6 shows another original depiction of Christ Pantokrator that has survived in the narthex, right above the main door. He also carries the open book showing the same text. By analogy with the compositions of the glowing bodies of saints Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus in the bema, the doorway might be seen as extending Christ's image downward and transforming the framed view into the Christ's body.

Whether positioned above the opening of the main entry or above the void center of the naos, these figurative representations reminded one that the body of Christ was a material container embodying the divine being. By analogy, these depictions of Christ create a symbolic expectation about the nonfigurative representation of the divine presence.

The symbolic relationship of the material and immaterial reality is reinforced by the design of the inside and outside appearances of the church. Figure 1.7 shows the exterior of Hosios Loukas. Other than the precisely crafted elements of windows—screens, arches, and phengites—the walls of the church are primarily made of large stones that vary in sizes, shapes, and finishes. This construction technique creates an impression that builders used almost random pieces of white rock found nearby. Textures of these walls strongly resemble the landscape around the church. The exterior of Hosios Loukas blends with its

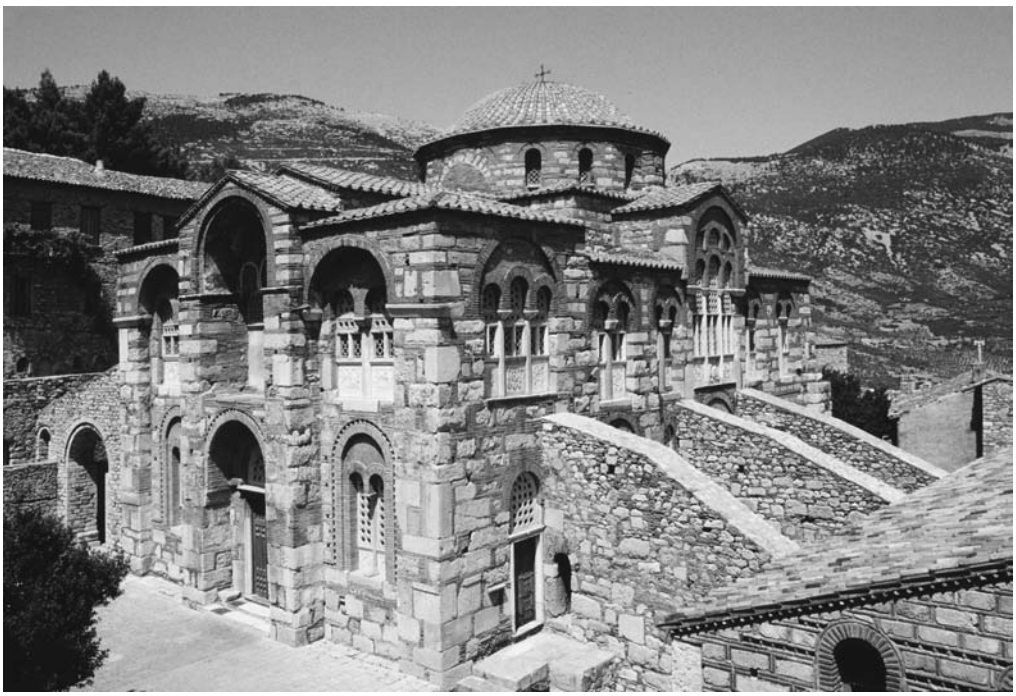


Figure 1.7

surroundings and acquires the tactility of that rocky desert. Moreover, this construction method creates an impression that the builders purposely did not put any finishing layer on—they stopped their efforts at the moment when walls were still revealing the process of transforming the land into the building. Unlike the exterior, the visual phenomena of the interior do not relate to the landscape. Rather, they create their own reality of relationships and tensions. Although most surfaces have been covered with stone veneers, the way they look has very little in common with the familiar appearances of natural stones. The slabs are perfectly cut and polished, revealing the inner structure of geological formations, textures that are usually hidden from human eyes. Such exposed earthly materials complement the paradoxical phenomena of light and color. Stones from the ground and light from the sky engage one another and create symbolic tensions. In the interior of the Katholikon, this tension is not between different visual effects but between two different modes of thinking, and only in this way could a Byzantine church become "the eye of the universe."[81] What seems easy to comprehend about physical reality is juxtaposed with phenomena that must be acknowledged without an explanation. Both aspects of reality are heightened and, because these phenomena exist within immediate spatial proximity, their juxtaposition becomes

unavoidable. I believe that this double quality of the interior of Hosios Loukas—being physically real and physically impossible—is a nonfigurative representation of the symbolic reality that Pseudo-Dionysius or John of Damascus discussed. The landscape-like exterior, the most explicitly corporeal shell, was necessary to contain or circumscribe nonfigurative representations. In this way, Byzantine religious architecture reached its post-iconoclastic specificity. Churches like the Katholikon moved beyond politically polarized issues of iconoclasm. They combined figurative symbolism with nonfigurative representation to deal with the actual complexity of religious issues behind the iconoclastic controversy. Architecture accomplished what verbal discourses and political struggles could not. Without reconciling or resolving theological contradictions, the Katholikon embraced the Dionysian notion of paradox as a mode of thought. Consequently, the building created the sense of a site suspended between two contradictory realities, where God's presence became perceivable, or rather, thinkable.

The Great Schism of Representations

In 1054, not long after the Katholikon had been constructed, came the Great Schism between the European East and West. The estrangement between Latin and Byzantine Christianity had grown gradually from the fifth to eleventh centuries.[82] The mutual excommunication of the pope and the ecumenical patriarch concluding this deterioration in relationships did not end political and cultural contacts, however. In 1095, after the Holy Land and the eastern peripheries of Byzantium had been overrun by the Turks, the Byzantine emperor appealed for help from the West and, in the same year, the First Crusade was launched. The twelfth century, the time when the West became fascinated anew by the Byzantine culture and its ties to antiquity, ended symbolically in 1204 when Latin armies captured Constantinople.[83] The cultural and political phenomena of that time played a crucial role in shaping certain aspects of the Western identity. Byzantium served as a mirror reflecting an image of culture that was familiar and at the same time different from the Western view of itself. This relationship energized the efforts to sort out similarities and differences. Architecture, specifically Gothic, played a fundamental role in these symbolic negotiations.

Unlike the many so-called architectural styles that preceded it, Gothic seems to have its identifiable point of beginning and a designer who seemingly created the style and its program. Otto von Simson, an architecture historian referenced by many scholars of medieval architecture, unequivocally identified Abbot Suger and his church of Saint-Denis as such a point of origin. According to Simson,

> It is profoundly significant that it took a man who was at once a great prelate and a statesman of genius, Suger of St.-Denis, to overthrow Romanesque architecture and to establish the Gothic in its place. Once created, Gothic became the conservative "language" of Christian architecture throughout the Western world. It is this language, with its local dialects, that we think of if we speak of Gothic . . . The Gothic cathedral originated in the religious experience, the metaphysical speculation, in the political and even the physical realities, of twelfth-century France, and in the genius of those who created it.[84]

Moreover, in Simson's view, Suger succeeded in implementing a particular symbolic agenda for that new kind of architecture. "The instant and irresistible success of the new style in France was owing to its power as a symbol. In a *language too lucid and too moving to be misunderstood,* Suger's Gothic evoked an ideological message that was of passionate concern to every educated Frenchman."[85] Lucidity of religious meanings was the hallmark of Scholasticism emerging on the threshold of the twelfth century, at the time when the rebuilding of the church of Saint-Denis was planned and executed.[86] Suger, however, elaborated on a very different source of inspiration. He attributed the novelty of his ideas to the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, mistaken at that time for Saint Denis, the patron of Christianity in France. The connection both puzzled and fascinated historians. Simson, for example, asserts that although "it is . . . curious to think that without the forged credentials of an anonymous Syrian writer who lived six hundred years earlier, Gothic architecture might not have come into existence. Yet this is very likely the case."[87] Erwin Panofsky wrote a book devoted to Abbot Suger's ideas and their relationships to the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius. Being the historian who associated Gothic with Scholasticism, he had to disarm the paradoxical complexity in Dionysian writing first. Thus, with a stroke of a pen, he introduced the most important concept in Dionysian thought, that of negative theology, as one which identifies "ultimate knowledge with ultimate ignorance."[88] Suger actually studied the manuscript of Pseudo-Dionysius, obtained from the Byzantine emperor and deposited at Saint-Denis. He used it in his conceptualization of the church and extensively wrote about its ideas.[89] As if anticipating the inexhaustible appetite future scholars would have for texts about intentions and ways of executing them, Suger outlined his motivations, recorded the process of construction, described the church, and explained its meanings.

Suger's ideas resonated with those of *Corpus Areopagiticum* in a very particular way. The remodeling of the abbey of Saint-Denis was based on a Byzantine-inspired fascination with the symbolic function of light, color, and the visual attributes of materials. The way Suger talks about visual experiences in the church leaves no doubt that he engaged with

the Dionysian notion of symbolic potency in visual and material phenomena. Consider, for example, the following description of the state of mind produced by gazing at the glittering and play of colors of precious stones on the altar:

> When—out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God—the loveliness of the many-colored stones has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner.[90]

This might have been a description of the spiritual experience of a person in the interior of the Katholikon. Anagogical metaphor, the symbolic ascension of the mind from the domain of mortals to that of divine beings, describes the symbolic functioning of both interiors. Historians agree, however, that "the major motivating force behind these [Suger's] dramatic beginnings of Gothic was corporeal light as analogy to divine light, with the ultimate goal the creation of the Celestial Kingdom on earth."[91] As does Pseudo-Dionysius, Suger praises mystical value in light when he says: "The material lights, both those which are disposed by nature in the spaces of the heavens and those which are produced on earth by human artifice, are images of the intelligible lights, and above all of the True Light Itself."[92] And Suger designed the church of Saint-Denis in such a way that it is primarily known for admitting an unprecedented intensity of daylight into its interior. Architecture history books frequently include illustrations similar to Figure 1.9, showing the choir in Saint-Denis to illustrate the novelty of ideas represented by the church. In order to symbolically create a "noble edifice that is pervaded by the new light," Suger transformed solid walls into screens of stained-glass windows.[93]

These symbolic issues closely resemble those in the Katholikon. Differences between the church of Saint-Denis and the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas are even more telling and they reveal how architecture negotiated exchanges between those two cultures.[94] Abbot Suger consistently transformed architectural attributes of nonfigurative representation—which were emblematic of post-iconoclastic Byzantine churches—into figurative representation and literal symbolism in the church of Saint-Denis. He took attributes that in Byzantium derived religious symbolism from the vagueness of perception and complexity of thought

and translated them into discernable and rationally controllable symbolic signs. Consider three examples:

First, both churches create a symbolic threshold in the process of entering a different reality. The Katholikon emphasized the paradoxical nature of such a transition. Crossing the line of the front doorway to the church was perhaps the least significant in the symbolic progression. Theological thresholds were to be deciphered as probing the limits of human perception and understanding. Thus, paradoxically, one enters the nonfigurative representation of the body of Christ while crossing or looking into the doorway shown in Figure 1.6. The most important border—the ambiguous transition between the bright volume of light in the dome and the darker space occupied by people below—was simultaneously perceivable and intangible. It could never be entered, not even identified with certainty. Wherever in the interior a paradoxical phenomenon was revealed to perception, be it a degree of concreteness that the empty space acquired in squinches or the dematerialization of surfaces covered with golden tesserae, such phenomena were beyond physical reach and verification, their physical limits indeterminate. Nobody could ever cross these kinds of nonfigurative borders.

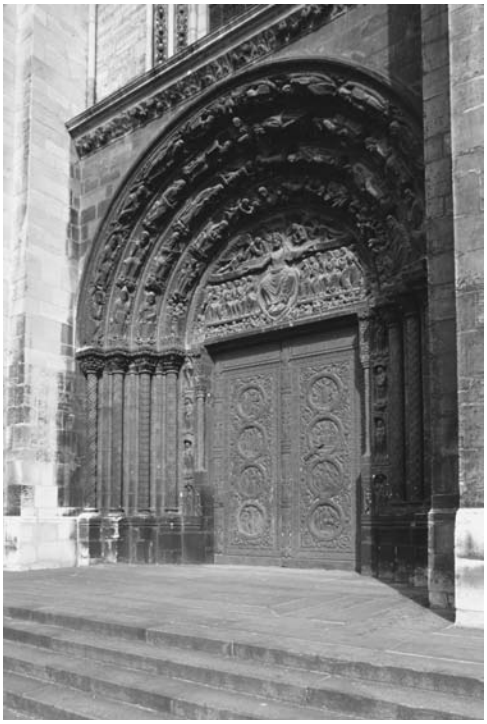


Figure 1.8

In the church of Saint-Denis, on the other hand, the threshold between two different realities was symbolically encapsulated and explained. According to Simson, "the façade was to be understood as a threshold leading from the life in this world to the eternity that lies beyond it. It is remarkable to what extent the iconographic program of the sculpture underscores this idea."[95] From a distance, the towers of the west elevation used to resemble a city gate, thus leaving no doubt that the church stands for the City of God, and then the multiplicity of sculpted figures in the portal and their arrangement imply structured interpretations.[96] Figure 1.8 shows how that sculptural composition annunciates the overall meaning of the symbolic threshold, a literal analogy to the day of the Last Judgment as the

gate to heaven. Unlike the nonfigurative phenomena of Byzantium, the three-dimensional figures of the portal, when brought to daylight and supported by inscriptions, communicate—one figure at a time—that the door separates the reality of daily life from the symbolic reality of anagogical ascension.

> The visitor to Suger's sanctuary—itself the mystical image of heaven—was reminded by him that he must leave behind the experience of his senses, or rather that he must perceive the shadowy image of an ultimate reality in whatever his senses beheld. *Suger makes it very plain that this is the only interpretation in which his art has any meaning* . . . But the motif of the "threshold" is impressed upon us with even greater insistence in the inscription that Suger placed on the gilded bronze door itself. Here the visitor was admonished not to stop at the admiration of the preciosity and sumptuousness of the work, but to let its luminous brightness illuminate the mind so that it might ascend "to the true light to which Christ is the door." *"How?" is explained by the golden door:* the dull mind rises to the truth with the help of material things. In beholding this light the intellect is resurrected from its submersion in matter [inscription on the door] . . . Suger has tried to define *as clearly as possible* the "analogical" nature of beauty (its partaking of a mystical prototype) and the "anagogical" purpose of art (its ability to raise the mind to the perception of ultimate truth).[97]

Undoubtedly, and with didactic forcefulness, the church entry reveals that "Suger wished to prepare their [visitors'] minds for the design of his sanctuary and for the manner in which it was to be understood."[98] Middle Byzantine designers would never accept such a degree of human control over representation of the divine presence.

Second, the interiors of the Katholikon and Saint-Denis look actually quite different. At Hosios Loukas, the shell of the building contains more than physical light. Symbolic light comes in a great variety of intensities, color, and temporal dynamism, and occupies empty space, stones, and surfaces of tesserae. Only such dynamic and paradoxical light could have represented in the nonfigurative way the spirit veiled in the materiality of the building. The whole interior materializes the paradoxical state of light, matter, and space, creating a symbolic tension between what may and may not be explained. In such an environment, many unexpected thoughts may cross the mind. In contrast, the appearance of the interior in the church of Saint-Denis results from multiple efforts to turn visual phenomena into unequivocal symbols or instruments for structuring thought in a particular way.

Light in Suger's interior was primarily designed to accomplish two goals: it was meant to turn the glass windows (like that in Plate 4) into a spectacle of almost magical figurative representations, and it was meant to produce an interior that would be much stronger illuminated than those of Romanesque churches. A high level of light was also important for showing the richness of precious objects collected in its interior. Unlike the dark and muted interior of the Katholikon, where ambiguity produced evocative sensations, the clear visibility and immediate discernability of meanings is essential in Saint-Denis. Bright and colorful windows contrast with monochromatic surfaces of stone. Compositions of stained glass are meant to draw attention to themselves as the ultimate medium of didactic processes.[99] Sunlight makes them visible but they in turn explain the meaning of the metaphoric light of religious wisdom. Their pictorial narratives are accompanied by multiple inscriptions, which reaffirm the process of symbolic communication.[100] These illustrations of religious messages could not be more different from the barely perceivable visual phenomena and their inconclusive character in the Katholikon. Ambiguous color spots, such as those in Plate 5, produced by direct light on floors and walls, which preserve some of the symbolic potency of Byzantine symbolic phenomena, were of no symbolic consequence in Suger's program.

Not only the use of light but also the expression of materiality and structure strongly distinguishes Byzantine and Gothic interiors. In the Katholikon, the whole interior is made of different kinds of veneer, be it slabs of stone, colored mosaics, or golden tesserae. Their appearances are not meant to relate to the physical construction of the building; rather, they are supposed to interact with all other visual phenomena. In contrast, in Saint-Denis the building reveals and emphasizes its structural solution. One can precisely follow the flow of forces of gravity—how they are collected and distributed by strongly articulated ribs and columns.

Figure 1.9 shows this representation of human ingenuity. Like the Scholastic principles discussed above, the symbolic harmony of the Gothic interior depends on the expressed consistency and rational integration of all material elements. This articulation of structure reveals more than the difference between the Byzantine and French development of technical knowledge. It shows a profound shift in the constitution of the space of representation. Elements of the Saint-Denis interior are divided into two exclusive categories. While figurative symbolism is associated with light coming through the stained-glass windows, the material structure represents technology as the earthly order.[101] Both categories are overtly constructed. Figures depicted in the windows are graphically precise; their shapes

Figure 1.9

and gestures directly relate to the sacred narratives. The structure, on the other hand, belongs to earthly materials and makes no references to sacred narratives. It is made of pieces of grayish stone assembled according to competent technical knowledge. While icons of stained glass illustrate unverifiable stories, the building epitomizes problem-solving as a manifestation of the ideal logic of construction. Such a polar division would be inadmissible in the Byzantine world. The Katholikon has exemplified multiple efforts to erase such differences. It would be also impossible to find in Byzantium such an arrogant expression of the desire to understand things totally and control their meanings. In the culture that produced buildings like Hagia Sophia, technical knowledge was important but the true knowledge was accepted as reaching beyond the rational capabilities of the human mind.

Third, the very sense of value is different. Suger was known for his obsessive passion for precious stones, gold, and pearls.[102] While one may think about the Katholikon as a container for the most immaterial of all substances, the church of Saint-Denis served as a physical repository of precious objects.[103] The Byzantine idea that spiritual value comes from the transformation of earthly materials into an environment that stimulates metaphysical

thoughts was replaced in France by the belief that the economy doubles religious symbolism. Suger commissioned and collected multiple objects for the quality of their appearance, but they also had to be literally precious—expensive to buy or make.

Suger never saw the Katholikon, but he visited Rome many times in his life and undoubtedly had a chance to see Byzantine imports.[104] By his own admission, he talked with people who had known Constantinople and refers to these "almost incredible reports" in his writings.[105] The Dionysian discourses and symbolic functioning of Saint-Denis must have resonated with the memories of things that the Crusaders had seen in the East. The appeal of the new building among the French elite very likely reflected fascinations triggered by the opacity of Eastern Christianity and perhaps even a culturally repressed envy of its artistic production. Suger disarmed such uneasy associations; he engaged everything in the Dionysian vision that might have resonated with the French knowledge of Byzantium but was beyond symbolic control. *Corpus Areopagiticum* was the crowning example of the unbounded possibilities in the intersection between imagination and Christian theology. Suger closed representational openness of that theology and turned it into a controllable system. By selectively eliminating the vagueness of inconclusive experiences, those related to nonfigurative representation, he constructed architecture that was politically useful and symbolically efficient.

As is always the case with architecture, the process of designing a building provided an opportunity for conceptual engagement with a variety of explicit and implicit issues. Suger, the designer, emphasized verbal production— a profound departure from the emphasis on nonverbal and exploratory modes of expression in post-iconoclastic architecture. His objective was not just to construct a new building representing a religious vision but to produce a new set of symbolic definitions, identities, and political relationships. Unlike the nameless builder who created the Katholikon as a place for individual contemplation of religious thought, Suger "wished to be understood, as an architect who *built* theology."[106] Following the lead of the school of Chartres, he established a new sense of architectural authority.[107] He justified the transfer of some of the power of God, the divine architect, to those, like himself, who wanted to participate in the supreme and eternal reason.[108] According to Simson, "St.-Denis was to be the capital of the realm," with the primary political function to extend the celestial hierarchy to the order governing Capetian France.[109] In this way the metaphysical and the political hierarchies were symbolically aligned. The paradoxical concepts of Pseudo-Dionysius were transformed into the theological justifications serving the current structures of power. All aspects of Suger's symbolic production, the symbolic construct of the material church, the volumes of his writings, motivations, rationales, and factual

information—as well as highly controlled spatial practices, such as the carefully designed ceremony of consecration—created a protomodern symbolic system more groundbreaking than his "invention" of the so-called Gothic style.

Another way of looking at this political construction would be to think about the design for the church of Saint-Denis as reshaping the subjectivity of believers. Dionysian ideas and the Katholikon as the space of representation accepted the personal freedom of perceiving and thinking religiously. It was the very nature of thoughts triggered by the Byzantine church, especially by nonfigurative representation, that they were beyond words and verbal communication. Thus any attempt to discipline or reduce such individual and unique encounters with the divine presence to communicable knowledge would have been futile. Mysticism is grounded in this type of intimate, intense, and unrestricted movement of thought. In contrast, the church of Saint-Denis not only choreographed the structure of communication but also implied the epistemological position of the believer. One of the most telling examples of this is in Plate 4, which actually shows the so-called Anagogical Window. It illustrates how Abbot Suger reduced the religious ascension of the mind to a selection of examples from the history of Christianity to demonstrate how to distinguish between true and false religious messages. Although the currently existing sequence of images is not completely certain, it seems that the higher in the composition of the Anagogical Window, the closer these references are to messages received directly from God. The roundel at the bottom of the widow, for example, depicts Christ standing between two females labeled as "Sinagoga" and "Eclesia," in which he lifts the veil off the old Jewish tradition and thus makes the Church the true authority on Christian symbolism. Directly above, another roundel shows Christ unveiling Moses, Suger's inscription explaining that Christ reveals what Moses, as the symbol of pre-Christian tradition, veiled. In the middle rondel, the image implies that true understanding must be extracted from material signs, as Paul separates the bran of the Old Testament from the flour of the New Testament.[110] The penultimate roundel shows the Book being opened by the Lion and the Lamb, possibly a reference to the word of God as recorded in Holy Scripture. Finally, at the very top, is shown the Ark of the Covenant, the container of the stone tablets materially inscribed by God. A crucifix is also placed inside the Ark, which God the Father holds up as if the Cross and the body of Christ belonged to the same category of unequivocal material means of communication as the Ten Commandments. Thus the references to the Jewish tradition seemed to have been necessary to exemplify its incomplete or impure version. By implication, the ascension of the mind is presented here as the elimination of incorrect religious understanding. Far

from negotiating any theological paradoxes or testing the limits of human perception, the window is a material manifestation of Suger's establishment of authority over the religious processes of sense making.

Contemporary scholarship of medieval representational practices in the West reveals that this was a much broader and institutionalized project. Abbot Suger contributed his skills to the more general trend to regulate ways of perceiving religious representations.[111] The church was an architectural testing ground for transforming the relationship between a person in the church and his or her objects of perception and contemplation. From being an interaction of independent entities, this relationship was transformed into that of dependence; being a believer meant a very particular way of perceiving and interpreting religious symbols. Thus the church of Saint-Denis is an early manifestation of an institutional apparatus which, in the thirteenth century, made it "no longer possible to separate oneself from the institution of the church, because other or individualized practices were either condemned . . . or made invisible."[112]

The didactic symbolism of Saint-Denis appears better understood than the meanings of the Hosios Loukas because Western episteme privileges the way Abbot Suger positioned himself as a designer. We know best what he explicitly wanted us to know. We follow his lead and appropriate the ideas of Pseudo-Dionysius whenever the history of architecture praises Gothic for its spiritual use of light, for example. On the other hand, although Dionysian ideas were integral to the architectural modality of symbolic thought in Byzantium, I do not expect to find explicit statements confirming the link between the Dionysian theology and the Katholikon.[113] Even at the time of iconoclasm, in the prologue to the definition of the council, the fathers of Nicaea II referred to their task as a continuation of unwritten traditions.[114] Buildings of every time and place manifest much more than what their designers can explain, and yet Byzantine churches especially emphasized that exploratory aspect of architecture. The Katholikon dealt with Dionysian thoughts because its theological concerns were rooted in the iconoclastic controversy. At the time the church was built, the representation of divinity was still a significant issue but it could no longer be reduced to matters of correct figurative depiction. The price Byzantium paid for such a lesson was too high to forget it. And that is why light, the most elusive and least figurative of all substances, became such a multifaceted medium; combined with the experiential richness of architecture, it made the paradox of the theological issues thinkable. It took a Western other, a priest and politician with a desire to draw clear lines of symbolic distinctions, to repossess and reduce those issues again. The contemporary knowledge of medieval architecture

has deeply internalized that process and its outcome. Gothic architecture as well as certain aspects of Scholasticism, concepts of *manifestatio* and *concordantia* for example, made Byzantine modalities of symbolism difficult to think for centuries. Nonfigurative representation became an unthinkable counterpart to Western ways of understanding symbolic practices. And that is why for scholars like Panofsky any other way of knowing medieval architecture seems either ignorant or irrelevant.[115]

2 Colonization and Symbolic Reality in Mesoamerica

Many contemporary studies of the conquest and colonization of Mesoamerica strangely resemble texts from that period. Both historical and contemporary writings frequently frame cultural and political phenomena in a similar manner—a problem reaching beyond the truthfulness of so-called factual information established in old Spanish records. Old and new documents seem to be grounded in a way of thinking that created the "black" or "white" legend of those events. Although the interactions between the Spaniards and different Amerindian cultures have been discussed as a military conquest, religious conversion, and a cultural encounter, these explorations often assume that those historical events may be studied and described in terms of explicitly self-conscious actions and their motivations. If such studies of intentionality have changed, their epistemology shifted merely from explicitly religious to a crypto-theological attitude[1] They are still similar because, whether one describes the history of the colonization in the context of the eternal struggle between absolute good and evil or as a political practice in which free will is bound by the network of dependencies, these approaches assume morally charged concepts of a universal self-conscious human being. As when Christian teachings presented life as a matter of succumbing to or resisting the devil's temptations, living in a culturally and politically complex world has been presented as a matter of conscious choices—as if lived reality has been totally accessible to the mind and provided all necessary clues for making correct moral decisions. For that reason, textual documents have been the primary historical resource as long as scholars are able to distinguish "factual" information from information that has been colored by biases, for example by political interests. It seems that the ideal research environment would exist if students could move back in time and, in some miraculous way, convince people to state the truth about their actions and reasons behind them. The only remaining difficulty in acquiring that ultimate knowledge would be knowing the appropriate languages. Such a relationship between reasons and actions underlies the dominant view of the history of the conquest and colonization of Mesoamerica.

However, rational understanding and language-based consciousness shaped only a small fragment of the encounter between the Spaniards and Amerindians. That emphasis has dominated Western scholarship because interpersonal communication and military

technology defined European superiority. Simultaneously, another encounter took place where two different modalities of thought collided and entered into a long-lasting process of negotiations. These exchanges frequently escaped conscious understanding and still elude historical knowledge. Although architecture and the visual arts played a crucial role in these interactions, their cultural function in Mesoamerica remains insufficiently explored.

The White and Black Legends of the Conquest

Those issues surface in some examples of historical and contemporary texts. The white legend—the history of good intentions—and the black legend—the history of bad intentions and even worse actions—can be traced back to the time when two different views of the conquest competed for the attention of the king of Spain. In the case of Columbus, America was a gift from God, an object intended to be found and absorbed by the church. Thus it was necessary to impose a nominative system of Catholic language on it. Tzvetan Todorov observes that "the first gesture Columbus makes upon contact with the newly discovered lands . . . is an act of extended nomination."[2] By systematically naming things and places of the New World, he brought the European order to that seemingly orderless reality. The beginning of the military conquest is marked by a change in the character of messages sent to the king of Spain. Columbus's letters revealed his belief in the religiously mysterious character of the discovery. America, God's gift, contained signs that had to be deciphered to follow the will of God. In contrast, letters carefully crafted by Hernán Cortés constituted more of a sales pitch or a business proposition than those of Columbus.[3] Cortés made a rational case for investing royal resources in conquering the land rich in natural goods and free labor and crowded with natives that should be converted to Christianity.[4] Thus, he constructed a twofold argument—the conquest was a matter of fulfilling a religious obligation and an economic opportunity. While promising huge benefits, Cortés played on the king's concern for establishing legal and theological grounds for waging a just war.[5] Thus, the white legend emerged as a positive program, a system of observing, explaining, and establishing a sense of a religious and civilizing mission. In his letters, Cortés recorded those aspects of the foreign reality and his own actions that could legally, economically, and/or morally justify the mission. Many texts produced by the missionaries in the sixteenth century followed that pattern, but they were more careful in registering the idiosyncrasies of traditional customs and their meanings. For example, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's description of traditions and religious myths or Fray Diego Durán's record of *The History of the Indies of New Spain* collected any information, regardless of how accurate, if it could

potentially help the primary task of religious conversion.[6] Known mostly for his brutality in persecuting the Maya people, Fray Diego de Landa wrote his relatively well-informed account of Yucatán and its history in which he projected the attitude of a devoted missionary with an almost sentimental fascination for that land and its culture.[7] Regardless of how well-crafted the white legend was, the image of Mesoamerica as the world of well-intending missionaries working with loyal and religious soldiers to bring the only true religion to those who willingly accepted a new god and king could not withstand the confrontation with the reality and consequences of the conquest. One cannot blame a few unruly Spanish soldiers or an unfortunate combination of natural disasters and epidemics for the death of tens of millions of Amerindians. Todorov says that "if the word genocide has ever been applied to a situation with some accuracy, this is here the case."[8] And this view of the conquest is at the root of the black legend. Bartolomé de Las Casas, who became the voice of moral conscience among the Spaniards, wrote multiple texts, most of them letters to the king of Spain, presenting a very different picture of Mesoamerican reality. Although defenders of the white legend say that it was not these letters but rather the way Anglo-Dutch propaganda exploited the black legend, Las Casas, a Spanish bishop, provided the most extensive and almost unbelievable account of mass murders and atrocities perpetrated by the Spaniards. However, even when he is extremely critical of these actions and motivations behind them, his attitude is that of a paternalistic guardian. In Las Casas's view, love and pity for the inferior seemed inseparable. Even cruel Diego de Landa seemed to have been more interested in the uniqueness of local cultures. Las Casas cared for these persecuted people not because he found something deserving of respect in their culture or sense of identity but because he acknowledged in them the values of a universal human child.[9] A child needs help in learning how to distinguish between good and bad intentions and how to act accordingly. In his writing, the Maya appear as lacking mature consciousness and thus they endlessly make the same mistakes, for example, falling for the simplest tricks that Spaniards used to capture and enslave them. Such a model of naive but abstractly good character agreed with the overall mission of the conversion. The paternalistic attitude toward the Amerindians united those who defended and abused them. Inga Clendinnen's speculations about the psychological profile of Diego de Landa and the reasons for his outbursts of cruelty led her to a similar conclusion, that his reactions were those of a father disappointed in his children.[10] This attitude of cultural paternalism was deeply internalized in the Spanish mission. People of the newly discovered continent had to be perceived as helplessly lost and misguided to become docile subjects of indoctrination. Only through the parent-child relationship model could the friars hope to bring Amerindians to civilized maturity.

The perspective that a culture is inferior when its system of judgment and knowledge does not resemble the West's also shaped the traditional history of the conquest. Alignments between knowledge and politics dominated the epistemological production of the nineteenth century. It is difficult to find scholarship published at that time or even at the beginning of the twentieth century that presents the relationship between Europeans and Amerindians outside the context of evolutionary theories claiming that the better-evolved European West had the right and obligation to civilize the Americas. Even when historians started to treat the term conquest as applicable not only to military actions but also to religious conversion, the white legend of good intentions persisted. In *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico,* published in 1933 in French and 1966 in English, Robert Ricard said that the missionaries "tried to continue the past; they respected [native] languages; they respected all the usages of current life which struck them as having no bearing [on religion]; they adapted their teaching to the temperament and aptitudes of the Indians; and they even went to the extreme of establishing sanctuaries upon the sites of pagan temples."[11] The motivations and actions of the conquest and colonization of Mesoamerica were studied differently at the end of the twentieth century. Of great concern is that Western knowledge silenced the point of view of the colonized others, and thus many scholars sought forgotten documents written by indigenous people. For example, Matthew Restall has studied such accounts of the history of the Maya from the initial conquest through the last decades of the colonial rule. His *Maya Conquistador* is intended to present the story of cultural survival written by the native people of Yucatán. When summarizing these documents, many of them of legal or paralegal character, Restall seems surprised that the Maya who wrote them were similar to the Spaniards in their understanding of political processes and aspirations. The title of the book refers to the fact that members of the Maya nobility frequently called themselves conquistadors and their ancestral stories are recorded as analogous to those who dominated them. That the Maya elite made an effort to politically position themselves in the colonial reality should not surprise anyone. These documents reveal the simple process of incorporating old political structures into the new system of dependencies. Maya leaders use a mixture of traditional and colonial history to establish in writing that, by tradition and legal precedent, they have the right to their land and administrative positions among the Maya people.[12] Worthy of reflection in such accounts is the fact that in places like the region of Mani, which experienced excesses of Spanish brutality, the "Spaniards . . . are neither directly nor frequently blamed."[13] Restall observes that "in Maya accounts of the Conquest, depictions of violence tend to lack moral judgment" because the Spaniards were seemingly perceived as "incidental to Conquest-era encounters between rival Maya groups."[14] In his view, the Maya

did not dwell on the fact that they were defeated and frequently abused because, historically, conquering others was their own specialty. This is not, however, a picture of native elite living in denial, unwilling to admit that a completely different religion and an alien sense of cultural identity were imposed on them. Those who wrote the complacent version of indigenous history understood the new political reality. They wrote directly or potentially to the Spanish authorities and their objective was to join that new elite. Such messages were crafted to conform to the view of reality favored by the colonizers.[15] Actually, why Maya wrote such seemingly indifferent statements is less interesting than the fact that in order to uncover what Western history missed, Restall and many others turn to written texts as the ultimate source of insight. It is as if, in order to problematize the colonial understanding of the encounter between two worlds, one merely needs to find an alternate version of the facts that Spaniards recorded. Ideally, such a text should be precise and rationally organized, just like Spanish ones, but able to present a different point of view—analogous to arguing a case in a Western court of law. But when Restall encounters texts that do not conform to the colonial models of knowing, for example in the Book of Chilam Balam, he glosses over them as "ambiguous descriptions . . . often couched in a discourse of riddles and metaphors that is less accessible than other sources presented in [his] volume." [16] Indigenous narratives, if they were intended to establish paralegal arguments in colonial reality, undoubtedly help in studying the world modeled after Western concepts of politics and morality. At the same time, this approach makes *Maya Conquistador* emblematic of studies in which rational statements by self-conscious individuals constitute universal grounds for understanding a culture and its history. This chapter questions that assumption and attempts to find a different way to study the Amerindian legacy and the history of their interactions with the Spanish systems.

A clear sign of the complexities that have eluded traditional history is the fact that, since the time of conversion to Catholicism until today, religious practices in Mesoamerica remain a hybrid of old and new beliefs. Syncretism—the indiscriminate fusion of different systems and practices—is the subject of studies exploring art and culture especially in Mexico. *Theaters of Conversion* by Samuel Y. Edgerton provides a good example of how syncretism manifests itself in old architecture.[17] Often Christian churches and convents in Mexico absorbed elements completely alien to Catholicism. The study documents the omnipresence of such practices and seeks to explain them within Amerindian and European symbolic systems of art, philosophy, and religious beliefs. The book includes numerous color photographs by Jorge Pérez de Lara, which support the argument only to a certain degree, and in many cases reach far beyond it. Their complexity frequently creates a tension with

the text. In pictures of colonial architecture and art, pre-Hispanic elements are tangible, but frequently they are woven so deeply into the fabric of seemingly Catholic art that even when causing tension they are difficult to decipher. In contrast, Edgerton's explanations are simple and deterministic. He follows the concept of the white legend while painting a picture of well-intending and open-minded friars who not only brought the true religion and the best aspects of European civilization to America but also generously tolerated local symbolic systems. Supposedly, such a hybrid treatment of sacral representations and spaces was "often negotiated by friars and Indians together."[18] In his view, initially admitting pagan signs to the space of a Catholic church was unavoidable because traditional symbols were inherent in the craft of local labor. Later, friars could safely accept indigenous artistic input as religiously benign because Amerindians expressed a sincere desire to become true Christians. Thus, for example, the concept of the pagan Sacred Tree helped to introduce the new Christian symbol of Catholic Cross. A mythical cave was symbolically transformed into an open chapel and helped draw crowds to places of conversion. Forms of pre-Hispanic signs, Edgerton implies, provided a comforting sense of continuity while the messages they communicated were radically changed by the new religion. In this way Mexican churches and convents created space for the visual and verbal reshaping of meanings. They operated like theaters because conversion became similar to spectacle, which works when it captures attention and may use heightened interest to convey a lesson. In Edgerton's view, such a practice not only did not trivialize religious matters but was profoundly successful. Amerindians "sensed 'divine presence' in the European-style churches and religious imagery."[19] And that is why they stayed true to the Catholic religion even after the colonial era ended.

That view of the conquest and conversion upholds traditional art history and the civilizing function of the colonial project. Nevertheless, Mexican symbolic environments and many images published in *Theaters of Conversion* escape Edgerton's explanations. Architecture has recorded not an intentional and conscious transformation of one well-formed religious system into another but an incongruous encounter of two very different ways of thinking. This is probably why, although his scholarship relies on factual statements by self-conscious individuals, Edgerton's study does not show that symbolic negotiations were an official policy of the Catholic Church. Indigenous texts do not explain those processes either. Records exist only in cases when religious syncretism was legally persecuted.

What soldiers of the conquest dismissed as irrelevant, missionaries overlooked as having no bearing on religion, and local people could not or did not want to articulate verbally—namely the function of symbolic thought specific to the indigenous nations of Mesoamerica—deserves a closer exploration.

Mesoamerican Modes of Representation

Western and pre-Hispanic ways of thinking about symbolic reality were profoundly different. There were also big differences among cultures of the Americas, but I will focus here on those common aspects of Amerindian symbolic production that the Spaniards encountered first, those that probably shaped conquistadores' attitude toward the identity of all people living in the New World. To sense the magnitude of such differences, imagine, for example, that in Mesoamerica it is possible to view the world as organized by two intertwined kinds of order—one systematic, explicit, repetitive, and predictable, and the other random, capricious, and constantly changing. Additionally, think of the two not in terms of polar opposites but as two ends of a continuous spectrum of symbolic experiences produced by divine forces. Such a way of thinking would be almost antithetical to the theological concepts that dominated Europe at the time of the colonization. The Judeo-Christian myth was steeped in the logocentric system of rules of conduct, reinforced by an equally logical set of rewards and punishments reaching beyond life on earth. Moreover, in contrast to all those myths and religious narratives that Western cultures developed for the conscious contemplation of existence, to justify suffering, and to tame the fear of earthly horrors, think of the world where self-inflicted pain, when combined with hallucinogenic chemicals, was accepted as the highest state of symbolic awareness. Moreover, consider differences in the forms of symbolic expression. When political domination was at stake, as in the case of iconoclasm or the beginnings of Gothic (to use examples from chapter 1), Europeans tended to reduce visual and verbal representation to communication—an unequivocal system of well-coded messages. On the other hand, those who study Mesoamerica find pre-Hispanic modes of verbal and visual expression puzzling, ambiguous, or riddle-like. Think of a world in which a form is considered symbolic not when it unequivocally communicates a certain meaning but rather when it increases the possibility of thinking symbolically, when it enhances and opens up the relationships between things and thoughts. Such a world is difficult for a student immersed in Western modes of thinking to comprehend, but this approach may provide a starting point for explorations of symbolic complexities of thought in Mesoamerica.

Following the lead of Miguel León-Portilla, Inga Clendinnen offers a specific insight into the world of Amerindian religious reality.[20] In a chapter of *Aztecs: An Interpretation,* discussing what she calls the aesthetics of the Mexica, Clendinnen quotes a traditional song:

> With flowers you write,
> Giver of Life.
> With songs you give color,

> With songs you shade
> those who live here on the earth.
> Later you will erase eagles and tigers.
> We exist only in your book
> while we are here on the earth.[21]

This poetic view of the world, according to Clendinnen, helps to explain Mexica fascination with colors and fragrances, as well as the forms of plants and animals. We can follow the song's vision as an interpretation of the relationships between gods and humans. Its metaphysical subject is presented through direct analogy to a particular human activity: the act of painting. As Clendinnen summarizes it,

> the experienced world is a representation composed out of representations, the original models in the mind of the divine artificer deriving from the world of the sacred. What we call "nature" is the creation of sacred art. So too are human arrangements. In this painted world men enjoy no priority: they (like everything else) are figments, their brief lives shaped by a divine aesthetic impulse. Even the achieved magnificence of the "eagles" and "tigers" (the "jaguars") of the greatest warrior orders is a fabrication, and fleeting as a flower.
>
> Such a view is subversive of most of our complacencies. Our art-nature distinction lapses where nothing is "natural," the objects of the seen world being themselves the highest art. Our world is not the measure for the "real," but a fiction, a thing constantly made and remade by the divine artificer, its creatures and things called into transitory existence through the painting and the singing of an elaborate pictorial text.[22]

Then, following the concept of the pictorial text, Clendinnen says that

> "art" among humans becomes a collective quest for the really real, with men working in paint or song or gold or feathers or stone to approximate the images of the exemplary text, and to retrieve the original unsullied sacred vision from the blurred and shifting images before them. Despite its fragility and inherent instability this uncertain world remains a text: defective, incomplete, chronically mutable to human eyes, yet to be deciphered as a painted book is deciphered by those with the skill to ascertain something of the enduring sacred world it imperfectly mirrors.[23]

This is a profound insight into a way of thinking different from the one that supported colonization and still underlies the great majority of scholarly studies of Mesoamerica. The

concept of the world as an endlessly changing divine vision highlights—in the lived reality—everything that is simultaneously unstable and symbolically charged, and thus this interpretation positions human thought in an extremely dynamic symbolic environment. I do not think, however, that Clendinnen intended the song to serve as an equivalent of the Rosetta Stone, helpful in deciphering the language of pictorial texts. Such an encapsulated interpretation would not reflect how complex the symbolic reality of the Nahua actually was.[24] Symbolic concepts in Mesoamerica were not as systematic or reducible to a paragraph of interpretation as the song may imply.[25] Explorations of narratives are not sufficient here. One must study not only a collection of stories, historical records, or figurative representations, but also the very ways that people in Mesoamerica produced symbolic thought. I will focus on those commonalities within that complex and differentiated world of symbolic practices that the Spaniards must have encountered and responded to.

To date, James Lockhart's analysis of the Nahua culture is among the richest studies of Amerindian symbolic practices. After studying not only written documents but also patterns of land use, arrangements of houses, songs, and architectural decorations, he found a commonality in their ordering and called it a cellular-modular structure.[26] The idea that two seemingly exclusive orders may simultaneously organize life, one arranging different parts to make them agree within an overarching structure, and another preserving an almost untamed independence of all elements, resonates with many other symbolic phenomena in Mesoamerica. Consider time, the concept of which was shared by many pre-Hispanic cultures. Time is cyclical: days and seasons happen with the precision of the repetitive movement of stars. But days and seasons vary in the way they impact human life; astronomical units of time mark seasonal changes in nature but also bring good fortune or a disaster. It is as if two independent forces regulated the symbolism of time—one reliable, precise, and somehow indifferent to our lives, and the second capricious and deeply intertwined with our existence. Nahua had a name for that second force—Tezcatlipoca, the "Lord of the Here and Now." This important god, in Clendinnen's words, "stood closest to men. Earth was known to be a place of exile, of danger, precisely because it was in the hand of Tezcatlipoca, who was what he was, and whose impenetrable will was most surely done."[27] This impenetrable will challenged the world in which one's date of birth, symbolically represented by a combination of a number and a sign of a thing or an animal associated with that date, implied one's destiny. Such a symbolic concept of time was a constant reminder of different symbolic forces negotiating matters of human existence.[28] As an epistemological issue, however, the asymmetry in our knowledge of these two intertwined symbolic concepts shows how Europeans discriminated in their perception of complexities in Mesoamerican thought. Even today, it is commonly believed that the highest achievement of pre-Hispanic

cultures is their understanding of astronomical time. Knowledge based on calculations, even when praised in Nahua or Mayan cases, tacitly affirms the scientific superiority of the West. The other side of that traditional way of thinking is encapsulated as exotic otherness, as something interesting because it is generally different—intriguing, but devoid of structured complexity or depth of meanings. For Amerindians, thinking through uncertainty and ambiguity in search of hidden orders—relationships not only of appearances but also bodily sensations—was inseparable from calculated ordering. Such a dynamic mode of knowing, however, has been marginal in Western scientific methods.

The state of hallucination had a special meaning to the people of Mesoamerica. It was frequently induced by naturally existing chemicals. The most popular was a mushroom called *teunanacatl* in Náhuatl, "the flesh of god," but they also used the peyote and maguey cactuses, seeds of certain plants, alcoholic drinks, and raw tobacco. Such alteration of physiology was frequently preceded by fasting and accompanied by bloodletting, all enhancing the effectiveness of the reaction.[29] Traditional Nahua songs praised drunk souls, but they referred to much more than physiological intoxication.[30] A performance or intense observation might have also induced this sacred state of mind. Various kinds of uncertainty and ambiguity in symbolic expression could possibly imply religious content. Thus, repetition or doubling seems to have played a crucial role in many Mesoamerican languages. According to Lockhart, the language of Nahua songs privileges "double phrasing" when "a fairly restricted set of stock metaphors, phrases, sentences, and sentiments recurs constantly through the corpus, mixed and varied in kaleidoscopic fashion."[31] More generally, Clendinnen asserts that "in spoken Nahua we find a developed predilection for linking of two words in tension to encapsulate a conventional notion."[32] Dennis Tedlock says that "to this day the Quiché Maya think of dualities in general as complementary rather than opposed, interpenetrating rather than mutually exclusive," and only in this way can the Maya express that the world is both divine and human.[33] Moreover, referring to the mythical record of how gods taught humans/animals to speak, Tedlock comments on basic rules of Mayan poetics. He says that "first comes an item that stands alone, but what follows is parallel verse, constructed by pairing words or phrases that are partly the same and partly different."[34] While explaining why and how he determined whether to combine or separate certain lines in his translation of *Popol Vuh,* he also shows how important was the way these ancient lines were verbally articulated by a native speaker, how taking a breath or allowing these repetitions to flow without interruption could change their meanings.[35] These examples reveal more than unusual duplications in language; rather, they imply a

possibility of musical attributes in speech, a kind of verbal articulation that may erase to a certain degree a distinction between spoken language and music.[36] There is frequently something rhythmic about many indigenous names of places and gods, as if they were to be accompanied by a drumbeat when spoken. When such phrases and ways of pronouncing them are multiplied, structured beyond what is necessary to convey an information-based message, not only syllables but also words and sentences may acquire attributes of a musical composition, and new kinds of connections become possible. Expectations about syntax efficiency are weakened and other orders of interpretation may enter the process of understanding. As in an instrumental composition, elements of a performance, sounds, or their sequences create complex syntactical interrelationships. Such structures are not based on verbal meanings but on formal attributes of sounds and their timing. When no single word or phrase (regardless of how important for the message) is allowed to dominate attention, the sense-making process opens up. Such a practice may start with a given, a memorized text and the conventionalized operation, but it may end up producing new meanings. Even today professional prayers in Guatemala or Mexico produce such performances. [37] The religious texts of Mesoamerica operated in this way. They created hybrid constructs with a dense fabric of articulation and repetitive melodic structures; their elements engaged in a complex and subtle play of interactions. At the same time, such a performance still preserved the basic linguistic order, a controlled degree of pure communication informing about who, what, when, how, and why.

These musical attributes in speech are symptomatic of the whole spectrum of similar practices that permeated Mesoamerica until the conquest. In cultures encountered first by the Spaniards, painted books played a particular symbolic role as representations emblematic of religious experiences.[38] Only four such Mayan books are known to survive the Spanish policy of destruction. They survived not because Amerindians identified exceptional religious or artistic value in them but rather because individual conquerors found them curious and benign enough. We do not know the actual range of artistic production these books sample and we may only speculate on their symbolic constitution. Undoubtedly, however, they attracted the attention of Catholic zealots and thus exemplify as much pre-Hispanic religious representations of Mesoamerica as they show what triggered violent responses among the invaders.

Among the four books, the so-called Dresden Codex is commonly acknowledged as the most complex and graphically refined. Figure 2.1 shows image 22b, a middle frame on page 22 in the codex. This illustration has been redrawn from a digital record to accurately

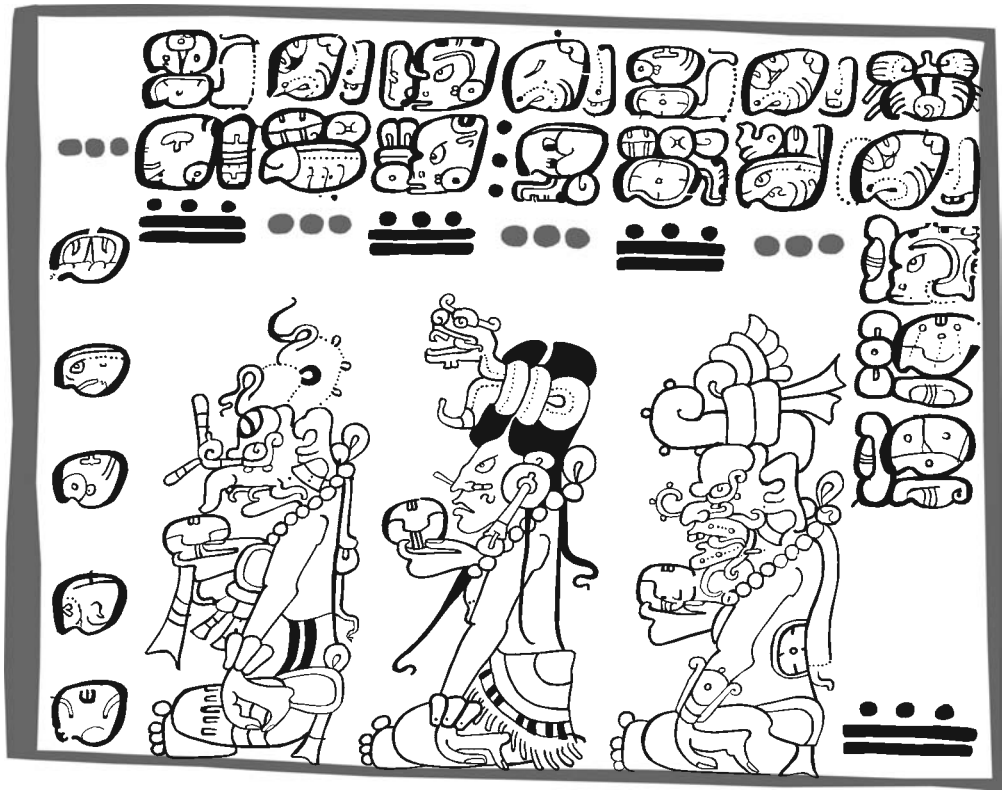


Figure 2.1

preserve not only the composition of figures but also the complexities of their articulation.[39] The picture is unbelievably precise for its size—approximately 7x9 centimeters inside the frame. To make it more legible it has been enlarged here.

The Dresden Codex has been primarily studied as Mayan writing, as a divinatory almanac containing quantitative information about the movement of stars, especially Venus, and their mythical connotations.[40] First scholars decoded its arithmetical content. Then, gradually, they started to decipher the meanings of particular glyphs, some reading them as syllabic-alphabetic notation, others seeing particles of grammar in them. Even those who, like Eric Thompson, admit that forms depicted in the codex operated like ideograms that change meanings depending on "context and the language or dialect of the reader," tend to follow the dominant assumption that these figures must be categorized in three ways as numbers, linguistic glyphs, and pictures.[41] Consider a different approach.[42] Figure 2.1 might be seen as notation going beyond Western categories of signs. Although it consists of a frame, rows, and columns of complex glyphs, plus three larger figures, it is impossible to say what constitutes

an arbitrary sign and what records appearances. Only numbers, those signs made out of bars and horizontal sets of larger black or red (gray here) dots, seem to have been shaped according to a formula. Indeed, the notation of quantities is consistent but even such a rule is symbolically weakened when presented against confusing exceptions—three black dots lined up vertically and attached to one of the glyphs at the top of the picture, for example. Still, non-numerical forms create the richest spectrum of relationships. Glyphs operate as visual units, unified by size and the way they are constructed. They are rectangular, as if in each case an implied frame was filled with a variety of smaller forms. Such box-like modules are organized in rows or columns and consequently define the empty space of an image, like masonry walls shape an interior. Frequently, in Mayan books or stelae, blocks of glyphs accompany individually shaped and larger figurative depictions of deities, mythical heroes, or lords. The interior of Figure 2.1 is occupied by three such entities: Chac (the rain god), the Moon Goddess, and the Sun God.[43] They all possess conventionalized features of identification, but they also resemble a familiar figure—the shape of a seated person. In Western traditions, this figurative depiction of a human body would stand in polar opposition to the arbitrary character of a linguistic sign, such as a letter. In the Dresden Codex, abstracted signs of glyphs and portraits of gods belong to the same continuity of symbolic representations. Each deity, but especially Chac and the Sun God, consists of parts that are simple and recognizable, and then others that are intentionally elaborate and confusing. The lower part of each figure seems relatively straightforward and easy to decipher as depicting attributes of the human body. The headdresses, fantastic facial features, and decorations they wear create forms that solicit a different kind of perception, however. They encourage the viewer to think about those complex shapes as engaged in a play of unpredictable relationships and resemblances. The play is so nuanced and rich that even those who know the deity's name—are aware of the particular identification features—cannot easily reduce this process to decoding. The heads of Chac and the Sun God are designed in such a way that they constantly dissolve in front of our eyes into a constellation of strange organic pieces, only to be reassembled as an anthropomorphic totality. Most significantly, this process of expanding perception and symbolic thought includes conventionalized signs. When studied closely, the glyphs reveal a symbolic constitution almost antithetical to that of Western letters. Many of their elements resemble faces or heads of animals.[44] They recall a spectrum of living beings ranging from monkeys/humans to dogs, jaguars, deer, rabbits, or rats. When bird-like, they may have beaks and even claws below the head. The artistic mastery of the Dresden Codex is revealed by the control the scribe had over degrees of such resemblances. Frequently, as exemplified in Figure 2.1, such zoomorphic features are graphically distilled,

Figure 2.2

simplified to a point when a small protrusion in the lower left part of an oval and a change of line width suffice to imply a head-like shape. Such abstracted sign-animals sit side by side with those literally having eyes and mouths. Glyphs also include figurative depictions of full figures of animals or naked human bodies.[45] This spectrum of glyph-signs is seen against graphically dissolving but complete figures of the three deities. Altogether the range of those signs is differentiated by the degree of their figurative familiarity or abstractness, and unified by the fact that they all refer to living beings presented here in profile and looking in the same direction.

These processes also included syntax and a broader sense of symbolic narrative. Small graphic elements placed around the primary head-like sign of each glyph operate like adjectives, prepositions, and suffixes—they modify the function and meaning of a sign. Moreover, the transformation of an arbitrary shape into a living being (and its inverse) seem to be depicted literally in a sequence of images on pages 16 to 23 of the Dresden Codex. There, the Moon Goddess is shown caring for infants, which are being gradually transformed from abstract graphic signs into zoomorphic or anthropomorphic entities. Figure 2.1 belongs to such a sequence because it relates to the cycle of growing maize. The Moon Goddess—the patron of earth, childbearing, and growth—the rain god—the one who makes farming possible—and the god of the sun, the one who brings drought, all hold the sign of maize in their hands. Similar to signs becoming entities, each seed of maize contains the possibility of future life-sustaining plants.

The Dresden Codex dates back approximately three hundred years before the conquest, and it was still in use when the Spaniards seized it.[46] At the time of colonization, however, scribing sacred books was not an art of the past. The Madrid Codex, the most recent among the four surviving codices, a fragment of which is shown in Figure 2.2, was created when most of the Mayan lands had been already conquered.[47] It is graphically cruder than the Dresden Codex but its underlying symbolic constitution is still the same. Glyphs are tightly packed. Larger figures of deities are visually interacting with their surroundings. Even when

the refined control over degrees of resemblances vanished with the old masters, an openness of interactions between graphic elements as well as blending of distinctions between arbitrary signs and living entities survived.

This treatment of symbolic signs reflected a deeply rooted modality of thought that permeated Mesoamerica. Its remnants may be found in various times and places. Much older Mayan ceramics, for example, included glyphs floating among strange birds or insect-like beings as if all of them were alive.[48] Such representations were carved in walls of old Mayan temples and commemorative stelae. A well-trained eye may find glyph-signs built into large depictions of deities, sacred animals, or historical figures— implying that they all were made of signs. This sign saturation of symbolic structures, unbounded multiplicity of references, nested symbols, and layering of meanings, permeated not only Mayan but other cultures too. The Codex Borgia, for example, is full of images in which patterns of bright hues operate like contours in the Dresden Codex. Colorful figures of Nahua are geometrically simpler but remain highly interrelated because of their controlled proximity and visual intensity.[49]

This way of thinking and perceiving permeates the Mesoamerican myths as well. Consider a few samples of how such symbolic concepts were structured. Again, doubling or repetition played an important role. In *Popol Vuh,* the Quiché Maya book of myths, twin brothers, One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu, represented qualities of human beings in the first cycle of their mythical struggle with the lords of Xibalba, Place of Fear. Temporarily defeated, they reproduced themselves in another set of twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the heroes of the second cycle. Later, the story adds another layer of twins. We learn that One Hunahpu also had twin sons, One Monkey and One Artisan. To play on these evocative repetitions and similarities, the story is told simultaneously in linear and nonlinear fashion. The narrative about generations of twin heroes and their dealings with the mischievous lords of death is loosely paralleled in mythical time by cyclical attempts to create human beings. Similar structures of folding or multiplication of symbolic concepts underlie the structures of the Mesoamerican universe. Thus Mayan gods and people lived in the world organized by layers below and above the ground. With some variations, such a vision is shared by many pre-Hispanic cultures. León-Portilla describes how Nahuas imagined their symbolic universe as consisting of thirteen vertically superimposed divisions above ground and nine levels underground.[50] The top two layers, known as Omeyocan, the place of duality, constituted the "source of generation and life, the ultimate or metaphysical region" and were inhabited by Ometétl, the primordial mother-father god of duality.[51] The Nahua story of genesis is also layered in time and consists of five cycles, each marked by the creation and destruction of a new sun and a different kind of human being. Concepts of parallel or cyclical existence

ranging from the creation of the world to the process of giving birth were considered inherently symbolic. Pregnancy, cycles of rebirth in nature, or even the simple quality of physical containment had symbolic significance. Similar to signs on the pages of painted books, two beings, one nascent within the other, evoked symbolic thoughts because it is possible to think about them in terms of various degrees of their unity or separateness, similarity or difference. The whole world was religiously charged when saturated with possibilities of nascent symbolism. Myths frequently specify how heroes and gods emerged, how they existed within another entity and then appeared in the process of birth-like transformation. Thus many Mayan deities were believed to emerge from mythical flowers or snakes. Maize represented cultivated cycles of perpetual rebirth. Those processes of transformation were not seen as progressing from elemental to complex, however. A seed contained a world of future plants within it. Unborn children were considered not only as separate entities but also as having a will of their own. For example, Coatlícue, mother of many Nahua gods, negotiated with Huitzilopochtli while he was still in her womb, and according to their agreement, she delivered him to the world fully armed and ready to fight. Even spoken language was pregnant with nested meanings. Tedlock finds the same practice of symbolic containment in the very textual construction of *Popol Vuh*. A play on words allows for a quotation to be contained inside other quotations, or a word hidden within other words.[52]

This way of thinking allowed the mythical universe and lived reality to overlap in everyday life and common environments. The presence of the metaphysical, however, was not revealed by miracles, as in the Catholic symbolic universe. Rather, in Mesoamerica, common things and practices acquired symbolic meanings when assumptions defining them were in flux. The seemingly impossible happened by a subtle shifting of expectations and knowledge about the world. In another myth in the *Popol Vuh,* animals helped deliver a message when they did what they usually do—swallow each other. First, a louse swallowed the message and thus contained it. Then, a toad ate the louse, only to be devoured by a snake, which in turn was swallowed by a falcon. Each bigger animal could move faster and consequently the message was delivered more expeditiously.[53] By referring to insects and animals and their well-known behavior, the story creates the continuity of the familiar, which then extends into pure abstraction—a verbal statement is integrated into the realm of living beings. The more familiar a mythical situation appears, the more likely it is to blend the common knowledge with something that cannot be verified or observed. This seeming paradox is grounded in the tacit ability to expand the obvious, to play with assumptions and ways of knowing. Amerindians valued one's ability to simultaneously perceive the world and consider different ways of interpreting it. It was this imaginative flexibility of the

mind that supported an intimate overlap between the mythical and lived realities. The most common daily practice—or an animal—had its direct counterpart in the symbolic universe. Particular features of species recalled their mythical doubles. Anything in nature that was dynamic, known for its ability to change, was of special significance. Thus, birds and flowers were emblematic of the transition from the material world to the reality of symbolic signs. When birds spread their colorful wings or when flowers are in bloom, they represent the emergence or possibility of evocative signs.[54] Snakes belong to the same category of sign-animals because, of all living creatures, their bodies are the most capable of creating the unbounded spectrum of forms, comparable only to lines drawn on paper. Even something as familiar and repetitive as the night sky was seen as a dynamic representation of mythical beliefs. This was possible because Amerindians viewed the sky differently than Europeans. The Greco-Roman symbolic interpretations of the sky relied on procedures similar to those that produce geometry. As in the Euclidean logic of abstract forms, dots of stars had to be correctly connected by lines in order to form the diagrammatic contours of celestial signs. Decisions about which dots to connect were arbitrary, and the resulting figures acquired meaning in an authoritative process of assigning a verbal narrative to them. In contrast, the Maya believed that the night sky included actual figurative depictions, which, as all divine signs, had been represented with a measured degree of ambiguity. Studies reveal that in the Mayan universe the Milky Way played a key role. Like the form of smoke or clouds in the sky, it creates vaguely defined but solid shapes. Depending on its angle and visibility above the horizon, the Milky Way was interpreted as becoming a tree, a crocodile, a canoe, or a pot, all of them crucial for the story of the genesis.[55] Unlike Europeans, who assumed that verbal interpretation is the primary tool that infuses abstract polygonal shapes with symbolic meanings, the Maya expected representations in the sky to solicit interpretations on their own terms. The Milky Way appeared not just as an illustration of a narrative designed to support a single correct interpretation, but rather to evoke a range of appearance-related associations. Its cycles of changes implied a symbolic morphing of different figures, a possibility of in-between phases of the genesis. In this way, looking at the night sky was similar to participants in a ceremony (probably intoxicated with hallucinogenic mushrooms) looking at a painted book, reciting or listening to a ceremonial speech, and opening up their minds to the symbolic complexity of the evocative images. This was the kind of experience that made a painted book into a sacred site of contemplation and superior viewing, an apparatus that helped humans transcend their symbolic nearsightedness. Tedlock says that "a long performance, in which readers [of a painted book] may well have covered every major subject in the entire book, was a way of recovering the full cosmic sweep of that vision."[56]

One's ability to use imagination to see beyond the visible was reminiscent of that mythical time when the first four humans had the gift of penetrating view, allowing them to "see everything under the sky and on the earth." The gods later limited this ability to seeing only things that are "obvious and nearby."[57] This framework of symbolic expectations could absorb the whole physical world—all species, physical phenomena, and daily practices past and present.

This attitude toward symbolic thought marks a profound difference between the Spaniards and Mesoamerican cultures. Europeans associated symbolic meanings with conclusive narratives and treated figurative representations as "obvious and nearby" illustrations of stable textual systems. Although diverse among themselves, Amerindians differed from the conquerors in this respect: they grounded their symbolic thought in the assumption that correctness of interpretation is not the ultimate goal of symbolic processes. Instead, they aimed at producing visual or physical environments or physiologically inducing a state of mind that opened up thinking processes. To engage the symbolic meant to deal with an unbounded richness in perceptual qualities, bodily sensations, and mental associations. Symbolic thought was equated with the thinkability of unlimited relationships within the world. Only when truly inclusive did one's observations, memories, and imagination recover the god-given power of symbolic vision. Pre-Hispanic representational forms and religious practices seem to have been designed to facilitate a unique balance between prerecorded ideas and the unpredictable insights discovered each time a religious ceremony was performed.

The connection between the worlds of religious beliefs and daily practices was intimate and direct. While experientially charged rituals created the most intense opportunities for expanding the power of symbolic vision, the very constitution of the human body—its physiology and appearances—belonged to the mythical universe as well. Representations of gods implied this way of thinking about the self. Painted and sculpted depictions of the Maya and the Nahua frequently show their deities as patchworks of body parts, ornaments, apparel, colors, visual signs, and glyphs of linguistic statements.[58]

Figure 2.3 shows Coatlícue, one of the most evocative of such representations, which was still venerated at the time of conquest. It stood in front of the main plaza at Tenochtitlán. The cruel deity looks like a monumental block, a 3.5-meter-tall glyph-like figure, with smaller blocks attached to its sides and top. This is a composition of elemental objects that are discernable because each of them is individually articulated. Visible attributes of her power—her emblematic skirt of snakes or the necklace of human hands, hearts, and a skull—are nothing but parts of living organisms. The fact that Coatlícue looks like a mechanical

assembly of organic objects transforms this sculpture into a powerful representation of forces of life. Partly human, partly animal, assembled from the living features of a snake and jaguar while adorned with the lifeless parts of animals and humans, this sculpture makes one ponder what holds all of them together. This way of thinking, prompted by mythical representations, probably underlay many Mesoamerican rituals. It is not a coincidence, for example, that bloodletting involved the piercing of tongues, fingers, or penises, and that human sacrifice often culminated in the removal of the heart. As if acting on individual entities that constitute a person, these symbolic rites seem to have tested or acknowledged the degree of symbolic autonomy those organs had within the totality of the human organism.[59] People thought of their own bodies as modeled after those of gods and sacred animals. Their symbolic parts might have been visible, like the face/mask, or hidden, like the heart.[60] They might have been connected physiologically—the way parts of the skeleton are linked together—or in a more abstract way. For example, in Mayan cultures, blood was emblematic of a universal link among all living creatures. It represented a substance called *itz,* a dynamic liquid that not only united body parts but ran through the whole living world. Its manifestations were found in tears, milk, sweat, and semen, but also in candle wax, morning dew, rain, flower nectar, secretions of trees, and even lava.[61]

Figure 2.3

Practices of dressing or decorating a human body expanded that model of the self into the realm of constructed representations. Although Spanish records filtered the richness of the designs that conquistadors had encountered, studies show that apparel and especially ceremonial costumes in Mesoamerica were similar to figures depicted in painted books.[62]

Plate 6a shows a pre-Hispanic example, a fragment of a mural from Cacaxtla in the state of Tlaxcala. These well-preserved paintings are probably the closest to a traditional group portrait one can find in Central Mexico. The whole cycle of murals shows scenes from a battle

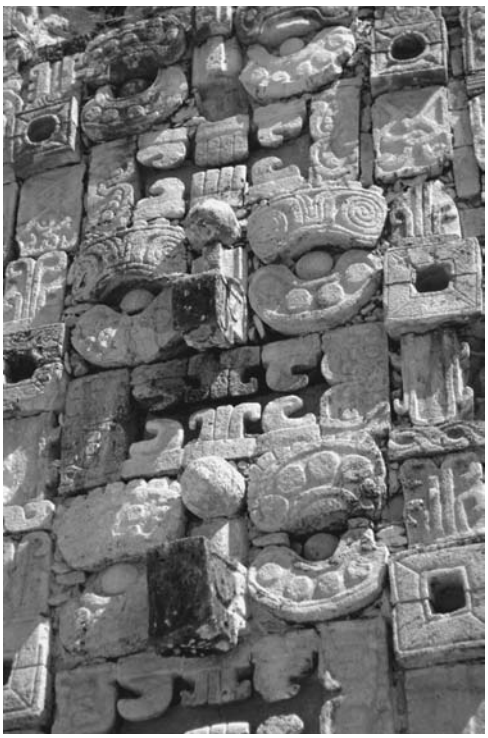
between warriors dressed like jaguars, probably Cacaxtlans, and their enemies in bird-like costumes. It is difficult to decipher at first glance what Plate 6a portrays. The complex image produces an impression of a chaotic collage, resulting from two kinds of visual operations. First, the palette of colors consists of a limited but relatively clear set of hues. Other than a few nearly white areas, all color spots are very similar in brightness. There is no chiaroscuro, no light-and-shadow-related differentiation of colors. Regardless of whether a particular piece represents either human complexion, the blue background, or white and yellowish clothes, the colors remain flat. The two dominant colors, the bluish and brownish, seem complementary, like red and green; they would produce a hue close to neutral gray if mixed. Second, these areas of single color are relatively similar in size, and they are distributed in such a way that no single figure dominates the visual field. As a result, the whole picture is abstractly fragmented.[63] Because such interrelated fragments tend to create multiple relationships, the mural works like compositions in the painted books. As in viewing the graphic constitution of larger figures in the Dresden Codex shown in Figure 2.1, in viewing the Cacaxtla mural, the mind oscillates between confusion and the ability to assemble parts into a figurative totality. The painting is more than an exercise in painterly complexity, however. Very likely the scene that the image depicts was complex in a similar way. Costumes were designed to create intense visual interactions and, in this way, to heighten the evocative quality of each physical figure. The accuracy of human bodies (graphically extracted in Plate 6b) implies that the depiction of the dream-like costumes is also correct. Unlike the contemporary pragmatic logic of warfare, warriors of Cacaxtla wore elaborate headdresses and various kinds of jewelry-like decorations, and their cloth was covered with patterns of different colors. These visual features were multiplied to the point that, even with the help of the reductive image next to Plate 6a, it is sometimes difficult to tell where the costume of one person ends and another begins. They must have created a similarly complex field of visual stimuli when brought together during hand-to-hand combat. These costumes represent because, like images in the painted books, they turn a human figure into a visual collection of signs, they open up many interpretations and encourage a blending between physical and mythical realities. This way of dressing, or rather transforming one's appearance into a representation, was still practiced in Mesoamerica when the Spaniards arrived. Many records indicate that costumes, especially made of feathers, were among the most precious commodities at the time of the conquest and were even offered as tributes to the conquerors. Almost any depiction of ceremonial figures, ancient or of the time of the conquest, includes an elaborate headdress or, in the case of Nahua warriors, back devices

designed to hold headdress-like signs in the air. Artists working with feathers were valued above many other professions, second in social hierarchy only to scribes who produced sacred books.

Figure 2.4

Why feathers? Because they turn people into dynamic figures. Feathers come in the richest selection of colors, they glitter and change colors when viewed from different directions, and, perhaps most importantly, they are light—even when many of them are used, the costume does not restrain movements. Figure 2.4 shows an elaborate headdress from Palenque, Chiapas. It must have been a masterpiece of craft, a kind of feather jewelry. When a colorful headdress is carved in stone, however, all its painted colors washed away, the visual characteristics of beautiful feathers disappear. Ceremonial costumes were not designed for static presentation. They were crafted for dynamic performances. All sources, pre-Hispanic and colonial, emphasize the importance of ritual dances in Mesoamerican cultures. Ceremonial cities, with their raised platforms, provided stages for such religious rites. People gathered in large numbers to view these mythical spectacles. Imagine how watching such a performance must have been similar to interacting with a painted book. The visual complexity of performers dressed in elaborate costumes would rival the intoxicating quality of images and glyphs in a book. Just as deities depicted in the Dresden Codex or Codex Borgia dissolved in the interplay of signs constituting them, the attributes of a dancer's body would disappear behind images foregrounded by the costume. The decorated figure of a person would change constantly, responding to the slightest movement. Bright colors, especially on moving feathers, would draw and perpetually shift attention. When combined with hallucinogenic mushrooms, alcohol, and repetitive music, watching this performance would become a highly evocative experience.

Ceremonial architecture was as integral to these events as were the costumes.[64] Much more than the practicalities of staging a spectacle defined sacral environments. Building forms, their decorations and figurative characteristics, were instrumental in constructing



Figures 2.5a and 2.5b

a unique kind of space of representation. Like songs, painted books, and dances, architecture was becoming symbolic when it fully engaged imagination and memory. Material structures helped destabilize symbolic thought in order to move beyond what was obvious and nearby.

Physical construction, the process of assembling the material elements of a building, created opportunities for expanding visual perception. Figure 2.5a shows a fragment of the elevation in Uxmal in Yucatán. The exposed pieces of stone are elemental and modular but altogether create much more than a wall surface. They amount to a depiction of a face mask consisting of eyes, a nose, and a mouth. Like images in the painted books or the costumes of Cacaxtla, this composition requires a mental effort to connect the appropriate pieces in order to see one or more of the stacked faces. Needless to say, such a process is never conclusive. Again, this impression suggests a perceptual moment when Chac, the god of rain represented here, registers simultaneously as a repetitive pattern of modular stones and a figurative representation, when the deity emerges from and blends back within the rational assembly of the wall elements. Because all the stones create a shallow relief, tightly fill an area organized in a girded pattern, and are similar in size and decoration, they interact in a variety of ways. They read as a field of

similar units, but also break apart and visually group themselves into discernable figures. This architectural sculpture achieves that unique balance that characterizes evocative Mesoamerican representations—it simultaneously reveals a technical logic and admits unpredictable symbolic insights.

The spectrum of such perceptual qualities was enhanced by other features. Frequently, designers used volumetric properties of large structures to play with the spectrum of discernability. For example, in many Mayan temples, including Uxmal, decorations of flat wall surfaces are relatively shallow until the surfaces intersect in a convex corner. There one can find full profiles of deities, their noses and lips sticking out from the very of edge of the intersection. Corners, by nature of their geometry, create conditions of three-dimensionality out of the flatness of adjacent wall surfaces. Mayan designers used them to represent a degree of emergence. Even the most realistic depiction positioned in the middle of a flat wall is figuratively less independent, more difficult to envision as an entity constituted in its own right, than a sculpture standing on top or sticking out of the edge of a solid mass.

Figure 2.5b shows another example from Uxmal, the so-called Pyramid of the Magician. Here, a line of face masks follow the steps leading to a temple on the top. These masks resemble those in Figure 2.5a but this time they are more spatial; each resembles a fragment of a cylinder. Their rounded shapes turn the corner and thus acquire spatial characteristics. The straight line of these faces follows the volumetric articulation of the pyramid and looks almost like a stream of turbulent water cascading from the corner of the temple down to the bottom of the mountain. The masks can also be seen as building blocks of another figure. The temple on the top of the pyramid in Figure 2.5b is another representation of Chac. The boxy figure reveals features similar to those of other face masks. The big nose-stone is missing, probably too fragile a cantilever to survive, but the eyes are clearly discernable above the gaping mouth of the doorway.[65] When such representational resemblance becomes thinkable, the whole pyramid is transformed into the body of Chac. The design of the temple follows the overall tendency of Uxmal artists to carefully measure the degree to which the deity is simultaneously singled out from or integrated with the constructed environment. To compensate for the fact that the temple face is singular in its size and elevated position, its facial features are less recognizable than those of small and repetitive masks. Otherwise the temple front could dominate perception. For people as dependent on rain as the Maya living in Yucatán, this representation must have invited symbolic reflection on the interrelationship between the material environment and this life-giving god. This visual blending and measured discernability of figurative depictions implied that Chac is a part of all inhabited environments.

Figures 2.6a and 2.6b

When the Spaniards saw towns and old religious centers, they registered their most superficial or quantitative aspects. Documents recorded that the conquistadors were impressed by the sizes of buildings or the workmanship of their decorations. They could not register their representational attributes. Thus, the blending of manifestations of Chac in Uxmal, a perceptual phenomenon symptomatic of the experiential characteristics of many other religious centers, was beyond Spanish comprehension. Mesoamerican architecture was grounded in the modality of thought capable of transforming both the constructed and natural worlds into one religious environment. Probably most impenetrable to the Westerners were those attributes that determined similarities and distinctions, continuities and discontinuities, within such a space of representation.

Consider Tikal, a large Mayan city in the tropical jungle of the El Petén region in Guatemala. It was long abandoned when Columbus arrived in America, but its ceremonial center exemplifies the cultural production of the so-called classic period, which shaped the Mayan identity for centuries to come. Tikal consisted of the ceremonial center surrounded by small structures scattered across a large area. Figures 2.6a and 2.6b, a semi-panorama, show a view from pyramid number two toward the north acropolis, shown on the left, and pyramid number one, shown on the right. Generally, centers of ceremonial cities in Mesoamerica consisted of open spaces defined by various kinds of pyramids, platforms, ball courts, and/or low linear buildings made of stone, which all might have been organized according to a strong geometric pattern, like those of Tenochtitlán or Teotihuacán, or built on a less rigorous layout, like cities of the Maya. In Tikal, the two main pyramids face each other across the empty space of the ceremonial plaza, a relationship that signals symbolic importance. The plaza clearing shown in Figure 2.6b and the two monumental structures stand in explicit contrast to the jungle that surrounds them. Spaniards never built a colonial

town over these structures, so it is still possible to trace how ancient architecture related to the landscape. Other pyramids, frequently free standing but sometimes also built in pairs, smaller platforms, and huts, created a nuanced spectrum of continuities and discontinuities with the land. They formed many smaller clearings and singled-out monuments but none established as strong a tension with the jungle as did the main ceremonial plaza. Approaching the center must have been like interacting with the Dresden Codex or deciphering the Chac figure in Uxmal. The whole town revealed in a measured way how signs emerge from a seemingly unrelated fabric of known appearances or patterns of construction. Scattered houses and small platforms blended with vegetation and topography. On the other hand, the experience of entering the ceremonial center in Tikal created and still conveys a sense of experiential discontinuity. The plaza perimeter is raised by the two pyramids, the acropolis on the north edge, and by topography and other structures on the south side. A person entering the center crosses an experiential threshold—leaves behind the ambiguity of the surroundings and must face the overt clarity of the main ceremonial space. The main plaza is an urban place—a room for public gatherings defined by the most tangible void and flanked by the most monumental buildings. Possibly it was a figurative representation of the myth of the beginning of the world, the time when "mountains were separated from the water, all at once the great mountains came forth." [66] The plaza might have resembled the sea, and the pyramids two primordial mountains, Sustenance Mountain (Yax-Hal-Witz) and Snake Mountain (Kan-Witz).[67] The traditional Mayan mode of representation, however, never allows an unequivocal interpretation to dominate other readings, a principle that applies to Tikal. As in Figure 2.1, where upper parts of images depicting Chac, the Moon Goddess, and the Sun God in the Dresden Codex counterbalanced the explicitly human attributes of their bodies, the acropolis in Tikal complements the plaza. Both are perceivable in the same view, and yet, while the emptiness of the flat floor emphasizes the figurative singularity of each pyramid, the complexity of artificial topography constructed next to them counteracts such a way of thinking. As Figure 2.6a shows, the acropolis consists of multiple platforms and small pyramids, which merge and overlap. They are undoubtedly artificial—containing tombs of pre- and early-classic rulers—but their composition also has something in common with the composition of large deities in Figure 2.1, or with the ways that Chac, the god of rain, emerges from the wall in Figure 2.5a. The accumulated forms of the acropolis create an environment where each set of steps is simultaneously singled out from and absorbed back into the larger field of experiences. Moreover, because they resemble the natural topography of Tikal—hills and ravines nearby—this representational field of references expands into the whole jungle. Thus the distinction between the natural and

Figure 2.7

artificial is weakened again.[68] When considered together, the acropolis and the two pyramids on the main plaza constitute not a system of different signs but rather a rich representational spectrum of discernability.

The facades of individual buildings were visually composed in the same way as the depictions of gods or ceremonial costumes. Figure 2.7 shows the top part of the Temple of the Sun in Palenque. Many Mayan sacred buildings had very elaborate roofcombs. Those similar to the Temple One in Tikal had their crowning elements deeply carved in stone. Others, like the screen of vertically stacked figures of captives in Hochob, were systematically perforated. The Temple of the Sun combines both of these techniques. This intricate roof form transforms the main body of the pyramid into a symbolic entity the same way a mask or a headdress turns the human body into a representation of a fantastic figure. Although limited by construction techniques and laws of gravity, this permeable roofcomb reveals an evocative abstractness of composition similar to that of feather jewelry shown in Figure 2.4. Set against a natural landscape, the building filters the view of the sky and creates a complex skyline. The arrangement of feathers crowning a ceremonial costume accentuated contours in a very similar way. Visually rich elevations and human performers together created "sacred environments for the unfolding of ritual performances."[69] They were all dressed up to stimulate the imagination.

The lower part of Figure 2.7 shows the remnants of sculpted decorations, which were probably painted over in the past. All Mesoamerican cultures combined carving with intense colors in ceremonial buildings. However, their designs differed, as did the culture-specific patterns of their costumes or their ways of depicting deities in painted books. For example, in Mitla, Oaxaca, such ornaments included strongly geometric patterns, as if directly informed by masonry or weaving techniques. The decorations of classic Mayan temples, on the other hand, seem to have been more inspired by organic forms, with the most elaborate examples still existing in Copán. Although ceremonial costumes of those times did not survive, the connections between painted books and architectural decorations are still easy to observe.

Even if the Spaniards saw those consistencies in visual and material articulation and associated them with pagan practices, they probably were not able to register other, truly unique, ways of constituting the Mesoamerican sense of a sacred site. Architecture of the New World implied a possibility that experiences and bodily sensations could immediately resonate with representations and thus produce symbolic insights.[70] Some of the most religiously charged discontinuities of the Maya were constructed and articulated in that way.

Plate 7 shows the Temple of Kukulcán in Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The picture is designed to reveal the complexity of experiences that transformed temples into sacred environments. The image uses the convention of a section to map the multiple spaces that a person encounters while entering the temple. Imagine a priest or a ruler of that region of Yucatán, a place where the land is flat and evenly covered with vegetation, climbing up the pyramid. He would gradually move above the tree line and eventually arrive at the height that permits a view unknowable to those on the ground. The steep shape of the pyramid makes the person standing on the edge of the elevated platform feel suspended in the air, surrounded by the vastness of empty space. This enhanced sensation of absolute openness and limitless view is then juxtaposed with its opposite—the experience of a cave,[71] for at the very top of the symbolic mountain, an opening leads to a sacred interior. The juxtaposition makes the opening into a significant threshold, a symbolic transition that operates on many levels. Consider, for example, the function of light. A person standing on the platform is flooded with intense sunlight. Entering the cave means a gradual immersion into the darkness. As can be seen in Plate 7, the first chamber of the temple is filled with indirect light but the second is dark, its side walls difficult to see because they are set back from the main line of entry. The dim light admitted by the small doorway barely reaches these surfaces, especially the steeply sloping ceiling. Although in the first chamber a person may still perceive and comprehend the shape of the space, it is much more difficult to do so in the second interior. Passing from the platform, approximately four meters away, to the second interior

momentarily hinders visual perception, since eyes take a moment to compensate for the difference in light. Limited visuality enhances tactile and auditory sensations. This spatial arrangement also means that the ceremonial incense would accumulate only in the second room, thus enhancing the experience. The most inner chambers in Mayan buildings are frequently dark, musty, and humid, their walls covered with subterranean vegetation. This symbolic environment engages all the senses and evokes thoughts of the mythical underworld. Possibly, in contrast to the physically limitless view from the platform, this was the place where one could recover the cosmic sweep of hallucinatory visions with closed eyes. Only a few steps away from the realm of omnivisuality of the physical world is the realm of visceral responses and unbounded imagination. This experiential discontinuity constitutes a profound and religiously charged shift in modes of perception and thought. Moreover, this space of representation directs memory and imagination. A person inside the temple would know that right below the floor is another pyramid, frequently containing the body of an ancient ruler. Constructing pyramids in layers, the latest containing the previous ones, was a common practice in Mesoamerica, as in the Temple of Kukulcán. The roof of the buried building is approximately four meters below the temple floor. The evocative environment of the inner chamber helps not only recall what is not physically visible, but it also folds time upon itself.

In Mesoamerica, architecture was an integral part of other representational practices that shaped the thinkability of religious ideas. It helped to establish a richness of possible interpretations and expand such a spectrum to its limits. All representational constructions, whether painted in books or on ceramics, worn as costumes, or inhabited, worked not by establishing a strict code of messages but rather by increasing the thinkability of an inclusive view of the world and its interrelationships. It is not surprising that Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish missionary who devoted most of his life to studying native cultures, could neither find an overarching system of thought nor reconcile apparent conflicts in the mythology of Nahua. He expected to uncover a familiar way of controlling symbolic meanings in places where people did not rely on predetermined taxonomies of interpretations. Each individual effort, each reading of a painted book or hallucinatory vision, and every performance on a raised platform guided thought. To a degree, they also transported imagination to unpredictable locations in the symbolic universe. An explicit set of fixed rules concerning religious meanings would have stifled such a dynamic symbolic production. While difficult to comprehend today, certain pre-Hispanic symbolic practices were undoubtedly cruel and inhumane according to Western standards. Without casting judgment, however, one must acknowledge that this was neither an idyllic land of poetry-loving people nor a

hellish place of senseless cruelty. The practices discussed here reveal that, at the time of the Spanish invasion, Mesoamerica was a place of unrivalled sophistication in the way people engaged visual perception, bodily sensation, imagination, and memory. The cruelty of sacrifices next to the subtlety of artistic expression might have manifested a quest for the richest spectrum of experiences. It is difficult to imagine a way of thinking that would be more inclusive, capable of absorbing symbolically all living beings, landscapes, and things as well as abstract concepts and the deepest human emotions.

The Emergence of Religious Syncretism

The process of conversion started soon after the conquest. In 1524, some surviving Nahua *tlamatinime*—wise men—engaged the original twelve missionary friars in a discussion about the validity of the indigenous religion and tradition. The humble and resigned tlamatinime said:

> Perhaps we are to be taken to our ruin, to our destruction.
> But where are we to go now?
> We are ordinary people,
> we are subject to death and destruction, we are mortals;
> allow us then to die,
> let us perish now, since our gods are already dead . . .
> We know
> on Whom life is dependent;
> on Whom the perpetuation of the race depends;
> by Whom begetting is determined;
> by Whom growth is made possible;
> how it is that one must invoke,
> how it is that one must pray . . .
> Calm and amiable,
> consider, oh Lords,
> whatever is best.
> We cannot be tranquil,
> and yet we certainly do not believe;
> we do not accept your teachings as truth,
> even though this may offend you.[72]

The discussion had very little effect. It could not change anything. The process of mass conversion was about to start. Franciscan Fray Pedro de Gante wrote in a letter that "for the first three years (1523–26) the natives had been 'unreasonable and untamable,' and unwilling to be shepherded to church."[73] In 1526, the friars went out to preach to crowds. Gradually, in the words of Franciscan Fray Toribio Paredes de Benevente, who was known as Motolinia, the same natives changed from being apathetic, with no interest in the new religion, to being active, constructing churches, and attending Mass every day. By 1532, Cortés believed that he could report to the emperor a great religious success.[74] Indeed, there was something amazing in Fray Martin de Valencia's claim that "each of the original Twelve [missionaries] had baptized over 100,000, thus amassing a total of over 1,000,000 converts during their first five years."[75] The picture was a little more complicated, however. The conversion seemed to have been as shallow as it was widespread. From this point in the history of Mesoamerica, legal records about uprisings and persecutions involve what in Spanish eyes looked like religious syncretism. Many converts who seemed to have enthusiastically embraced the new teaching saw no inconsistency in a way of life that both followed and contradicted rules of Christianity.

From the very beginning, missionaries noticed the problem. In the same year when Cortés reported religious success, the Franciscan provincial Jacopo da Testera, in his letter addressed to Emperor Charles V, spoke of the "wall" that created a puzzling separation between the Indians of New Spain and the friars. Pauline Moffitt Watts shows how Testera and his friars wanted to see the wall primarily as a language barrier.[76] To deal with this problem, they placed emphasis on the knowledge of native languages. The Spaniards not only mastered Náhuatl but wanted to improve it. Writing grammatical rules gave them an opportunity to regulate the language. The principles of *Arte de la lengua Mexicana,* the first grammar of Náhuatl published by Andrés de Olmos in 1547, and other missionary grammars that followed it, were closer to classical Latin than to the actual native language, however. "Having created these grammars, the monks proceeded to compose sermons, catechisms, and other forms of doctrinal and devotional literature in the language of 'classical' or 'missionary' Nahuatl."[77] This was more than a symptom of disconnection from the living reality of local cultures. The Spaniards believed in language as the ultimate medium for controlling reality.[78] The history of the conquest recorded many legal practices ranging from the plainly absurd to the merely suspicious, and some quite shrewd. For example, in 1513, a royal jurist wrote the so-called *Requeirmiento,* a document whose primary objective was to declare that the pope had given Mesoamerica to the Spanish Crown. "Each conquistador

was to carry a copy of this document with him and read it, in the presence of a notary, before making an attack."[79] Bartolomé de Las Casas describes how this legal requirement was carried out. The document, illegible to Amerindians, was read at night and from a distance so no one in a village could hear it. When no one woke up to pledge submission, the soldiers would pillage the community.[80] This type of legal performance was meant to state the rights and intentions of the Spaniards. Theoretically, they expected to receive a similar statement of acceptance from the Amerindians—an illusion of legal communication used to justify ruthless actions. Many other documents show attempts at imposing concepts of Spanish order on traditional life in Mesoamerica, even if they were completely out of touch with reality and could not be implemented. Clendinnen describes how, in 1552, a judge representing the Audiencia (the Royal Court of Appeal of Guatemala) was sent to Yucatán to establish proper order in the region where the Maya, who had initially embraced the new religion with enthusiasm, were contradicting the principles of Christianity in their daily life. Thus, Tomás Lópes Medel not only prohibited practices such as multiple baptism that conflicted with Catholic dogma but also, in order to control the practices of everyday life, he "proceeded to a string of regulations aimed at enforcing Spanish notions of propriety in sexual and familial relationships . . . Certain procedures were to be followed at meals: the sitting around the table, the cleanliness of the table cloth, the folding of the hands, the saying of Grace, all being laid out in obsessive and wistful detail [although] the Maya lacked tables, chairs, and tablecloths."[81]

The Spaniards saw language not only as a tool for regulating the reality of the conquered world, but also as the primary medium for shaping perception of their own actions and accomplishments. History recognizes Cortés as a precursor of contemporary mass communication. A brilliant strategist—and as if anticipating that printing would shape the ideological struggles of the next two centuries in Europe—he practically invented the political usefulness of publicity. He was probably the first to use print to argue his case simultaneously before the royal family and the public in Spain. As he was sending his first letters to the royal family at the beginning of the sixteenth century, he also published them in Spain. He knew that "open public legitimation of his behavior would be far harder for the crown to ignore than a private request."[82] During the conquest, he used the best interpreters to gather and militarily exploit information about myths, the meanings of particular dates, and political animosities in Mesoamerica. Tzvetan Todorov is right in his assessment that "the encounter of Montezuma with Cortés, of the Indians with Spaniards, is first of all a human encounter; and we cannot be surprised that the specialists in human

Figure 2.8

communication should triumph in it . . . This victory [was intended] to produce the illusion that all communication is interhuman communication."[83]

Thus, the world where to think religiously meant to embrace ambiguity, where evocation of the symbolic was so inclusive that it embraced all contradictions and conflicts of the lived reality, was conquered by people whose symbolic thought totally depended on communication understood as coding and transmitting unequivocal messages. The Spaniards, specialists in interhuman communication, made very little effort to understand the indigenous modality of thought. Even if they wanted to, they probably could not comprehend what was outside the familiar system. Instead, they associated all aspects of a different way of thinking with satanic practices and in this way justified the rampant destruction of representational objects and the violent suppression of traditional practices. Figure 2.8 shows an illustration from the *History of Tlaxcala Mexico* written between 1581 and 1583.[84] The image shows the burning of painted books, or more specifically, the eradication of their symbolic content. This is a representation of the policy that led to the destruction of almost all folded codices. In the picture, the material books are shown only in the hands of young assistants, while the fire consumes something more abstract—a collection of signs and figures. The friars and their helpers are depicted with figurative clarity. At the same time, the symbolic content of the painted books is represented as a chaotic assembly. Similar to pre-Hispanic representations of lords or glyphs discussed earlier, these signs are multiple, evenly spaced, and similar in size and articulation. The contour of this ball of fire and its figurative symbolism is expressly complex. Moreover, a closer inspection may reveal that what is being burned refers less to images in painted books and more to ritual decorations and costumes that Amerindians used in their religious rites. Thus, the image consists of a collection of headdresses, masks, and back devices, as well as decorations made of human hearts and all manner of feather-like elements. This single picture shows the well-structured world of the missionaries in opposition to the seemingly

untamed chaos of pre-Hispanic symbolic practices. But this depiction of the Nahua chaos is actually highly selective and accurate in acknowledging aspects of the indigenous modality of thought. Undoubtedly, the Spaniards registered that certain visual forms and performances had special power in shaping imagination in Mesoamerica. That is probably why they were so efficient in destroying the artifacts representing the highest achievements of those cultures.

The destruction of symbols and eradication of traditions was to serve a higher goal. The friars had to convert millions of pagans and they had to do it fast. They were under pressure to prove that the New World embraced their teachings. After all, the whole legal argument for waging a just war in Mesoamerica hinged on its purely religious character. Thus, the Spaniards used all means at their disposal to complete the task of conversion, or more specifically to create a set of social and political effects that were acceptable to the Catholic audience as unequivocal proof of such success. This process of conversion and colonization of symbolic thought, however, included symbolic exchanges far beyond what the missionary friars and Amerindians intended or could understand—even going beyond what studies of those events have acknowledged. One set of problems was caused by the fact that the Spaniards acted within a dichotomy specific to Europeans, the absolute character of religious dogma and the relative nature of any practical undertaking—practices of educating, for example. The other problems resulted from an inherent conflict in their tactics: although ignorant and dismissive of native ways, the Spaniards still tried to exploit them. Consequently, the missionaries unwillingly contributed to the emergence of syncretism, a new hybrid modality of thought.

The Spaniards' policies and actions centered on spatial and visual practices. Watts, for example, provides an insightful reading of Diego Valadés's *Rhetorica Christiana*, a text written from the perspective of a person knowing both the intentions and practices of the religious conversion in Mesoamerica. Valadés was a *mestizo,* born in New Spain in 1533 of a conquistador father and a noble Tlaxcaltecan mother. He studied at the school of San Francisco de Mexico established by Pedro de Gante to educate the sons of the native elite. Then he studied in the Franciscan Colegio de Santa Cruz, where the Franciscan intellectual elite prepared him for priesthood. Before he went to Europe in 1571, he spent twenty-two years preaching in Náhuatl, Tarasco, and Otomi.[85] In his *Rhetorica Christiana,* published in Perugia in 1579, Valadés argues that the Franciscans invented a successful system of communication, in which mnemonic devices helped to establish a connection between hieroglyphic signs, native dialects, and Spanish, all essential to the processes of conversion.[86]

The book includes multiple pictures illustrating the text. Figure 2.9 shows a depiction of the mission and the spatial practices of conversion. It is a map of activities within a fenced-in space. The area is evenly divided by a tacit grid partitioning the components of teaching: Genesis, instruction in catechism, preparation for marriage, instruction in penance, confession, baptism, marriage, classes in writing, a proper burial, and other elements of the missionary program.[87] The space and the didactic procedures are highly structured, almost regimented. Amerindians are organized by activities or types of teaching. When necessary, they are grouped by gender and age. Sizes of groups reflect practical aspects of the instruction. The composition of the whole picture is also concentric, revolving around the most symbolic icon, a depiction of what Watts calls an "intra-mental ark." The monks carry "the container and content of their consciousness."[88] This fully formed religious consciousness—the ultimate goal of missionary education—is surrounded by figurative representations of less perfect structures of mind, exemplified by persons whose thoughts and knowledge are in the process of being shaped. Consequently, the last ring, a utility buffer shaped by trees and a wall, is the place for those, including children and people incapacitated by sickness, who are not fully capable of understanding religious lessons. The buffer is also where one can find the dead, those whose consciousness will never be properly formed. While the set of arcades at the bottom opens to the activities related to the life outside of this space of conversion, the gate in the wall at the top must have led to a cemetery. This picture reflects the ideal arrangement of didactic activities, a conceptual blueprint used by the first twelve Franciscans. Only a large outdoor space could accommodate this mass-conversion machine. John McAndrew says that "only after the arrangements for Mass, Catechism, and the other steps in indoctrination had been satisfactorily made, could the friars begin to build the parts of the monastery where they themselves were to live. Surprisingly, but logically, the church was often the last component of the group to be built, and consequently it was the part most likely to be delayed, postponed, or renounced."[89] Churches, when finally constructed, played an important role in continuing the processes of religious education. They followed the logic of open-air chapels and turned church interiors into a didactic space of representation.[90]

Valadés argues that painted pictures played a crucial role in this successful system of cross-cultural communication. After destroying indigenous images, the friars created an array of their own figurative representations and used them as primary missionary tools. An emphasis on new images seemed a shrewd tactic aimed at exploiting the culturally grounded fascination with practices of visual perception. Missionaries traveled to remote villages with *lienzos,* painted cloths or linen, and other visual aids and used them to create

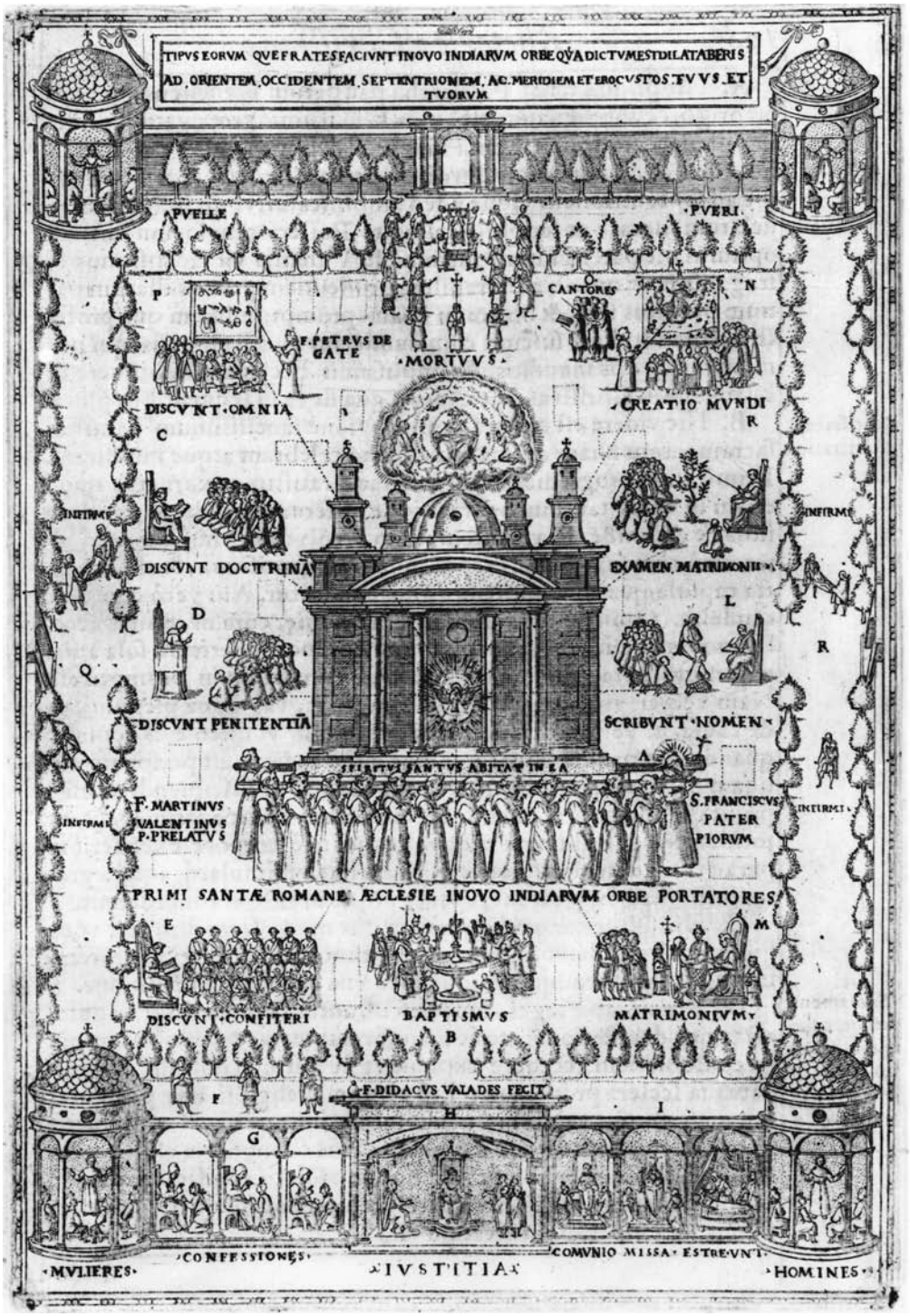

TIPVS EORVM QVE FRATES FACIVNT INOVO INDIARVM ORBE QVA DICTVM EST DILATABERIS
AD ORIENTEM, OCCIDENTEM, SEPTENTRIONEM, AC MERIDIEM ET EROCVSTOS TVVS ET TVORVM
PVELLE
PVERI
CANTORES
F. PETRVS DE GATE
MORTVVS
DISCVNT OMNIA
CREATIO MVNDI
DISCVNT DOCTRINA
EXAMEN MATRIMONII
DISCVNT PENITENTIA
SCRIBVNT NOMEN
SPIRITVS SANTVS ABITAT IN EA
F. MARTINVS VALENTINVS P. PRELATVS
S. FRANCISCVS PATER PIORVM
PRIMI SANTÆ ROMANE ÆCLESIE INOVO INDIARVM ORBE PORTATORES
DISCVNT CONFITERI
BAPTISMVS
MATRIMONIVM
F. DIDACVS VALADES FECIT
CONFESSIONES
COMVNIO MISSA ESTREVNT
MVLIERES
IVSTITIA
HOMINES

Figure 2.9

Figures 2.10a and 2.10b

spectacles of religious teaching.[91] It must have been difficult to explain Bible stories to people whose whole frame of reference was completely different. From the history of the European world to vegetation, animals, furniture, and even something as basic as food, bread, and wine, biblical facts must have sounded like abstract concepts in Mesoamerica. Thus, religious images had to be realistic and literal, depicting scriptural stories in the most explicit way.

Figure 2.9, at the top, shows that the first twelve Franciscans used pictorial banners to teach, for example, the Latin alphabet and the story of the creation of the world. Initially portable, later they become a permanent component of church decorations. Figure 3.10a, another illustration from *Rhetorica Christiana,* shows the use of large paintings installed inside a church. Figure 2.10b shows a remnant of such an arrangement in the Franciscan church in Tlalmanalco near Mexico City. The frames painted on the wall show how closely their layout resembles that in Figure 2.10a.

Images helped to hold attention and illustrate the Catholic world, but their realism alone was insufficient in the processes of indoctrination. Catholicism is a religion grounded in text, so the initial phase of conversion must have emphasized dissemination of doctrine. To be efficient, the friars had to achieve unprecedented consistency in memorizing and delivering religious information. But the moment they reduced religious consciousness to the skill of remembering words of Catholic dogma, the task of conversion was transformed into a technical problem. Then they could reach outside of religion in their search for a solution, and they found it in techniques of

the ancient art of rhetoric, skills popular among Renaissance humanists.[92] The Franciscans believed that the structures of natural and artificial memory were universal and timeless and external to religious concerns.[93] They favored those mnemonic techniques that used actual and imaginary architecture. In Valadés's writing, and, as I will explain in chapter 3, in the world of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, architecture became synonymous with the act of ordering.[94] Most frequently, the Franciscans used a technique in which images assigned to pieces of religious information were structured by imaginary architectural space. The technique resonated with the actual use of church interiors. Valadés explains: "Images are certainly forms and signs and representations of those things which we wish to remember. It is necessary that we arrange these things, such as the genus of horses, lions, books, stones, in certain places. For places are like writing tablets or leaves of paper. The images are like letters, the disposition and location of the images is like writing, and speaking is like reading."[95] Referring to Valadés's concept of the ark of religious consciousness depicted in Figure 2.9, Watts provides an example of how elaborate these mental structures became.

> According to Valadés this ark-church-tabernacle provides *loci* sufficient in number for storing "all of sacred scripture." He describes its architecture in considerable detail, giving the length of the atriums for each of the four sides, the number and height of the supporting columns, and describing the different materials from which the various columns are made. This description would yield six hundred general and specific *loci* within which to organize scripture . . . The total number of supporting columns is sixty, corresponding to the number of authors of scripture. Each author is assigned a column, but not just any one. Scripture is divided into four categories; legal, historical, sapiential, and prophetic. The eastern side, from which one enters the building, is supported by columns imaging the authors of legal texts, because it is through observation of God's laws and precepts that one enters the true life. Thus these columns image both Old Testament authors such as Moses and New Testament authors such as Paul.[96]

While complex mental architecture served those who disseminated scripture, and realistic paintings in church interiors helped disseminate texts among Amerindians, the primary challenge of conversion was still the task of correct verbal communication. That is why Valadés considers the new system of visual and linguistic coding to be the crowning achievement of the Franciscans. It was "invented . . . through unremitting fasts, vigils, and prayers directed to the lord God so that as if by a divine wand he deigned to show us the

principal way in which this people, living in the manner of beasts and clearly possessed by a diabolical reign, could be *attracted* and led towards the understanding of the true God."[97] The most important aspect of that system was the way it used a rebus-like coding technique to establish a phonetic and visual alphabet accessible to Amerindians. Figure 2.9, upper left, shows Franciscan Fray Pedro de Gante (Gate) teaching a system of cross-cultural communication.[98]

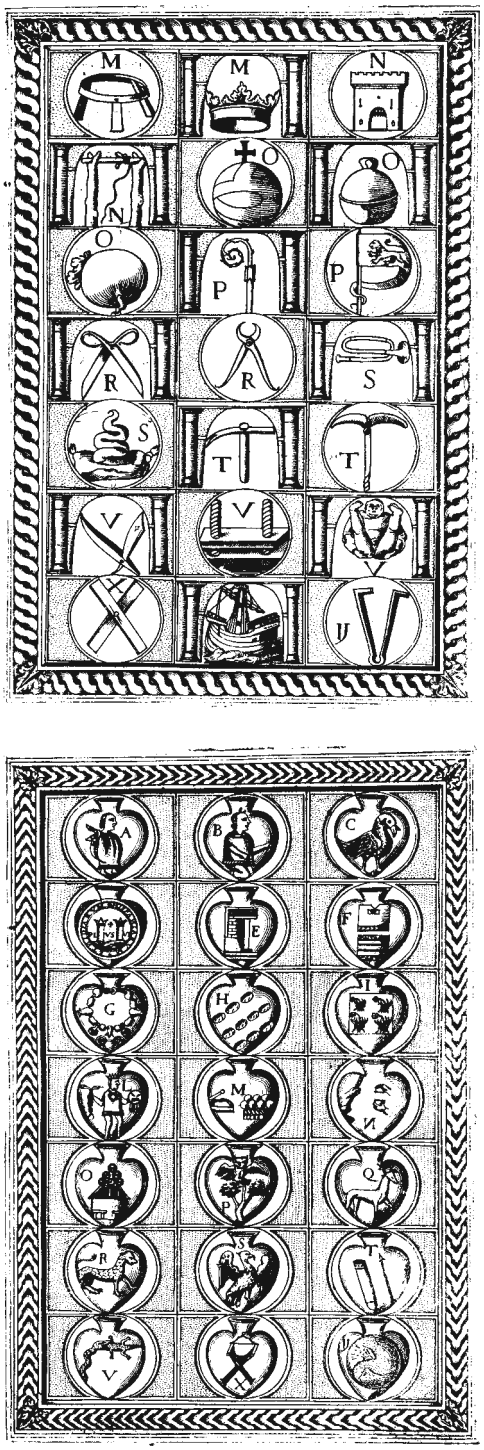
According to Gerónimo de Mendieta, the phonetic alphabet was grounded in "discovering indigenous words that conform in sound to various Latin words and then placing images of the objects signified by the indigenous words on a piece of paper in such a sequence that when the Indians memorize and name the objects in their sequence they will be 'reading' Latin phrases or sentences."[99] Whatever the friars considered their accomplishment, there was something suspicious about a native person "reading" a Christian religious text by producing superficial signs of understanding— actually nothing more than sounds approximating Latin pronunciation. Even more suspicious was that it satisfied the missionary zeal of the Franciscans. That kind of conversion effect is acceptable only if one considers, as the friars did, that the correct reproduction of texts constitutes the ultimate objective of dogmatic teaching. Superficial as it was, the practice was successful in attracting new converts, so deserves closer scrutiny.

Figures 2.11a and 2.11b show pages from *Rhetorica Christiana* illustrating these alphabet techniques. Figure 2.11a shows a visual aid for teaching the alphabet. "In the rebus alphabet, the shapes of the letters [were] taught through their figural similarity to some natural or artificial object."[100] Showing them in pairs apparently emphasized that what the two figures had in common should be remembered and associated with the letter. Thinking through difficult resemblances or establishing meaningful relationships in the process of deciphering complex connections between figures was emblematic of pre-Hispanic representations. Moreover, doubling—as a way of counteracting the dominance of a symbolic singularity and its unequivocal meanings—was common among many native cultures. Amerindians must have found something very familiar in those techniques of teaching the Western alphabet, something inviting open-ended interpretations of the Christian signs.

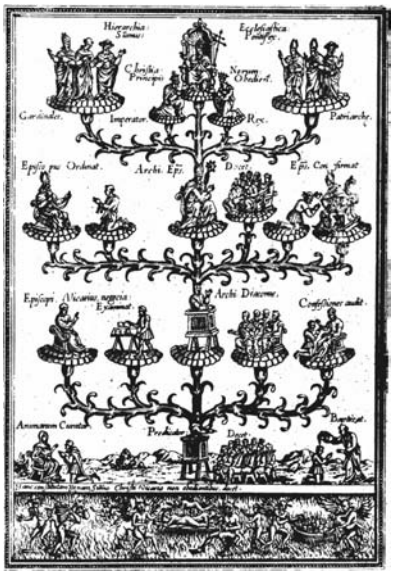
Figure 2.11b, an illustration of another teaching aid, reaches even deeper into pre-Hispanic ways of thinking. It shows that the "phonetic alphabet [was] correlating letters with indigenous images that [were] consonant."[101] This was an old European mnemonic technique but the missionaries' practice moved far beyond the original model. When they observed that Amerindians responded more strongly to certain ways of structuring their

visual aids, friars uncritically reinforced the effect. In their perspective, they only improved a technique of delivery without affecting the content. Figure 2.11b must have appealed to the native people as a collection of glyph-like images in which new symbols were placed inside a figurative representation of a heart, which they associated with the most essential meaning. Seen in a Catholic church, the heart was still charged with references to myths and rituals, a set of symbolic relationships reaching far beyond what the friars could or wanted to understand. These examples show that when the missionaries discovered such culturally grounded predilections, they exploited them for practical reasons. Limited by their own modality of thought they dismissed the possibility that Catholic dogma could be contaminated by something that lacked the verbal clarity and philosophical structure of Western systems of communication.

There was something truly modern about the way the missionaries made their mistakes. Once they discovered efficient ways of grabbing attention or producing superficial effects of teaching and learning, it seems they saw no need to consider the broader consequences resulting from their practices. Diego Valadés says that "this art for announcing the divine word was so fruitful and *attractive* that once the orations before the public assembly had been completed, they [Amerindians] conferred



Figures 2.11a and 2.11b



Figures 2.12a, 2.12b, and 2.12c

together among themselves explaining the figures."[102] Thus, the Spaniards multiplied their visual techniques, made their graphic aids larger, and explained the whole Catholic world within such a framework. *Rhetorica Christiana* is an inexhaustible source of images that illustrate to what degree the axiomatic separation of the religious content and the communication technique justified a wholesale borrowing from the pre-Hispanic modalities of religious thought. Figure 2.12a, for example, is a representation of the celestial and terrestrial orders. The image places God the creator at the very top of this hierarchy. It is not the representation of hierarchy that is questionable here; rather, it is the direct reference to the concept of a layered universe. By evenly spacing a set of semiconcentric lines, the image resonates with the Mesoamerican notion that the place we live in is just one of many layers, each occupied by a different kind of beings. The only difference is that the Omeyocan, the ultimate or metaphysical region where Ometétl resided, is now occupied by the Catholic God.[103] Additionally, while layers supporting different entities refer to material phenomena, be it the earth, water, or clouds, only indigenous stories of creation could explain the vertical line in the center, a chain-like connection which must have resonated with their mythical concept of the primordial umbilical cord of the world. Similar depictions representing the torments of sinners extended such an

order into the realm of hell, an underground layer. The second image, Figure 2.12b, is a diagram of administrative dependencies in the ecclesiastical order of the Catholic world.[104] The image shows in the most literal way that preaching is at the core of this structure and the pope is at its head. The diagram represents these dependencies in an unusual way, however. All figures are graphically interrelated by the medium of a huge plant, a weed as large as the world, flowers of which hold up all the important figures of the system—as in the mythologies of the Maya and nations close to them, where deities were believed to have emerged from the buds and flowers of sacred plants. Undoubtedly, this way of representing attracted those familiar with the old framework of symbolic references. Figures of bishops and cardinals almost mechanically replaced old deities in such a system. But this practice also reinforced a way of thinking that profoundly contradicted concepts of Catholic doctrine. In the eyes of Amerindians, these didactic pictures not only referred to pre-Hispanic ways of coding importance but also implied the need for multiple interpretations and diverse meanings. What Westerners considered a matter of mere convenience and efficiency was for Amerindians symbolically charged, and their tacit modality of thought subverted Western assumptions.

The initial practices and strategic mistakes made by the Franciscans were repeated by the other orders that joined the missionary task. Figure 2.12c shows how, in Acolman, near the ruins of Teotihuacán, the walls surrounding the altar in an old Augustinian church still carry a huge depiction of ecclesiastical hierarchy, a monumental version of the layered order illustrated by Valadés.

If one considers not only techniques of conversion but also Catholic architecture and art, they reveal practices based on the same assumptions. Thus, in the Western world of polar opposites, churches and didactic aids were constituted of two kinds of elements: those embodying meaningful content and those functioning as meaningless material background or structure. The former—symbolic figures designed to communicate messages—were not negotiable. They operated like figurative depictions of church officials in the missionary diagram of ecclesiastical hierarchy in Figure 2.12b, fixed by their legal and symbolic definitions. The latter, on the other hand, could have been treated with pragmatic flexibility. Like the huge weed in Figure 2.12b, they supposedly functioned outside of dogma and were only as important as they supported or created an environment for the symbolic figures.

This distinction was not as simple, however, as that between a symbolic object or sign and a technical solution. In the colonial way of thinking, the shape of a building resulting from a particular technique of construction might have been explicitly symbolic, while certain kinds of decorative forms in a church were seen as devoid of meaning. George

Figure 2.13

Kubler and Martin Soria say that, especially in the years after the conquest and wherever technically possible, the patterns of Spanish styles were implemented in the colonies.[105] What they call a style included the spatial layout of buildings and the patterns of their embellishments. Sacral buildings were among those that were replicated most thoroughly. Their technical solutions were treated as explicitly meaningful when they were associated with and articulated the ecclesiastical hierarchy. New centers of Catholic power could not do without vaulted ceilings and cupolas, for example. Frequently, such techniques of construction, however, were incompatible with geological conditions in the New World. This accounts for what happened to prototypes in Antigua, Guatemala, where almost all of the monumental churches are now in ruins or are only partly reconstructed. From the very beginning, their structures kept collapsing and the colonial authorities kept reconstructing them. Antigua is located close to an active volcano in a seismically active area. Heavy thrust-producing constructions, such as vaulted ceilings and cupolas, are not designed for these kinds of conditions. Figure 2.13 shows a fragment of Antigua's cathedral. Its construction began in 1543(5); damaged many times by earthquakes and reconstructed, it was finally declared a permanent ruin in 1773. Although it seems irrational from the contemporary perspective that generations of Catholics in Antigua could not see the futility of their efforts, they could not compromise those features that communicated the symbolic importance of churches in the capital of the Audiencia de Guatemala, until the seat of power was moved to a new location—Guatemala City. In their minds, changing masonry vaults to a more resilient wooden structure would have altered the meaning of a religious building. The domes of key churches were especially symbolic; their physical characteristics were unequivocal symbols, fixed by the colonial power relationships.

Sculptures and paintings communicated religious messages in the most literal way.[106] Guatemala was the main center supplying southern Mexico and the rest of Central America

Figures 2.14a and 2.14b

with sculpted figures and altars.[107] In many churches in Mesoamerica, especially those in old colonial centers, religious sculptures were treated in a particular way. More than figurative representations, they were obsessively realistic—made to look exactly like real people. It is easy to find examples with "glass eyes, eyelashes of real hair, wigs, and . . . costumes of real fabric," which, according to Kubler and Soria, were "used in order to facilitate the beholder's identification with the divine or saintly personage."[108] Figure 2.14b shows the interior of the church of Santo Domingo in San Cristóbal in Chiapas. The smaller image on the left, Figure 2.14a, shows a fragment of the same view but focuses on the statue of Santo Niño de Atocha, a miraculous reincarnation of Christ, who supposedly appeared in Atocha and helped its Spanish inhabitants in the time of war. The child is sculpted with typical precision and is dressed in real clothes. Sculptures of this kind feature correct proportions and precise modeling of faces and hands, which are painted to simulate human complexion. Color techniques, for example, express qualities associated with health, sickness, or racial affiliation. Their clothes are materially real and maintained so they always look fresh. Other attributes, like the stick or the woven basket, are added to increase the associational match between the figure and its prototype. Depending on the religious narrative, which the figure illustrates, a person may be presented in a static or dynamic pose. When flexibility is necessary, for example to perform various phases of the Passion, such a sculpture may operate like a mannequin with movable limbs.[109] Altogether, these three-dimensional portraits do not represent; they communicate religious narratives. Glass eyes and wigs of real hair do not facilitate emotional identification with the replicated figure. Rather, they make the correct recognition possible; they facilitate the process in which a beholder may

compare a memorized description of the divine or saintly personage with attributes of the sculpted statue. Santo Niño de Atocha is designed to be thought of as both an actual person—whose racial features are explicitly different from those of Amerindians—and as a symbolic figure. Similar to the didactic images discussed earlier, such a figure is unequivocal. This incarnation of Jesus Christ is ready to protect Catholics, especially those of Spanish descent. Receiving such a message is different from reading a book, however. One must mentally single out the religious symbol from its field of vision, correctly decode all relevant attributes of the prototype, and recall the associated story. Such a mental procedure is not negotiable—there is no leeway for engaging imagination, and only one symbolic conclusion is acceptable.

This process of perception and deciphering would be much easier if realistic figures in the church of Santo Domingo were placed against a background of white walls. Figure 2.14b, the picture on the right, shows that Santo Niño de Atocha is surrounded by and almost blends with a richly sculpted surrounding. This is not unusual. In Mexico and Guatemala, the more important the statue the more likely it is to be immersed in a complex field of ornament. The wall surface and architectural elements articulating its depth are covered with organic motifs. They are not only sculpted but also gilded, as if to increase the optical confusion they produce. Reflected light creates visual patterns with a complexity that rivals those of pre-Hispanic representations. These decorations were labor-intensive and expensive. Yet, in a church they supposedly operated like a benign wallpaper behind meaningful figures—intriguing visually but of no consequence for religious teaching.

Sacral interiors with a high intensity of decorations are characteristic of Mesoamerica. This *horror vacui*, the fear of empty undecorated surfaces, had its counterpart in Europe, but the quantitative or nonhierarchical multiplication of decorations was especially popular in American colonies, where Amerindians had a traditional predilection for evocative richness in visual forms. The church of Santa Mariá in Tonantzintla (shown in Plate 8) provides a crowning example of such a practice. This relatively small interior is so completely covered with sculpted decorations that it is sometimes difficult to perceive the overall shape of the building. Even more than the walls of Santo Domingo in San Cristóbal, this whole space seems to intentionally confuse visual perception. The sheer quantity of ornamental elements, which are similar in size and type of articulation, is overwhelming. The dominant organic pattern is gilded or white. Statues of angels and saints are the same size as elements of the floral fabric and thus blend with them. Only a delicate application of color distinguishes these small sculptures from the background. Like pre-Hispanic representations, these figures are simultaneously singled out from and absorbed back into the field of the overall

experience. The space is also saturated with explicitly native elements or relationships. Heads of cherubs, for example, are positioned in such a way that they are fully integrated with this unusual plant-like interior. Together with larger figures of saints, cherubs are nested within this organic form similar to the way small signs had been nested in pre-Hispanic representations. Moreover, floral decorations resemble headdresses above many sculpted heads. Even human hearts carved with physiological accuracy found their way into this hybrid array of signs.

This is another example of the Spanish strategy of religious teaching, a way of disseminating Catholic messages that Valadés referred to as didactically "fruitful and attractive."[110] Interiors like that in Tonantzintla were attractive to Amerindians because, like ancient painted books, they are visually intoxicating or hypnotic. At the same time, they include and supposedly promote explicitly Catholic symbols. In the very center of this space, a believer finds a hyper-realistic figure of Santa Mariá dressed in actual white clothes and serving as an unequivocal embodiment of the proper narrative. Like the didactic tools of the early phases of conversion, this kind of Catholic space of representation assumes two kinds of components necessary for religious teaching: elements that catch and hold attention and those that disseminate correct texts. The former were seemingly devised to increase the number of churchgoers. Being ideologically neutral, such a design technique could safely play into the aesthetic preferences of Amerindians. The latter were explicitly religious. Catholics must have considered them immune to symbolic contamination because, at any point, an instructor could verify whether believers remembered the correct interpretations of symbols deemed to be meaningful. Naive and arrogant, such an attitude created a comfortable impression that no other way of symbolic thinking existed outside the Catholic modality of thought. That worldview is consistent with the way colonial institutions treated the lived reality of Mesoamerica. Disconnected from indigenous cultures, the system was quite stable because it was grounded in military power. That colonial reality was so resistant to critical insight that the hybrid symbolism of Santa Mariá in Tonantzintla was constructed long after the Church officially recognized symptoms of religious syncretism and even started to doubt the orthodoxy of the missionary methods.[111]

This way of shaping the thinkability and unthinkability of ideas in the process of colonization resembles religious practices of the Counter-Reformation. The Spanish assumption that rich decorations in religious spaces could serve to attract the attention of Amerindians, which could then be redirected to proper teachings, resonates with representational strategies that the Jesuits employed in Europe.[112]

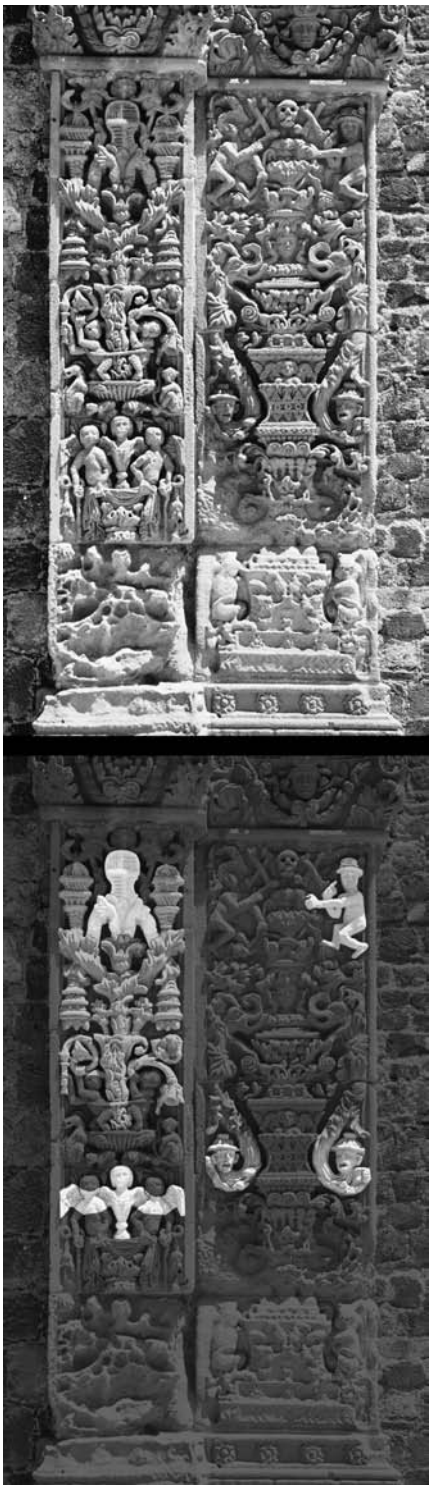
The gap between colonial and indigenous ways of thinking was probably never systematically analyzed either by the Spaniards or the Amerindians. The colonizers found comfort in ignorance of the fact that symbolic meanings could be constituted differently than their system of well-established signs and their explicit interpretations. At the same time, the colonized found comfort in the fact that the teachers of the new religion never specifically condemned, nor even acknowledged, religious content in the most nascent phase of meaning formation. Authorities only persecuted as syncretism the desecration of specific Catholic symbols or the explicit mixing of pagan and Christian ceremonies. From the indigenous perspective, this policy must have encouraged a measured fusion of seemingly complementary modalities of thought. Such an attitude was deeply rooted in the all-inclusive religious traditions of the Amerindians.

Indigenous builders found multiple opportunities to saturate new chapels and churches with an essentially pagan mode of representation. Figure 2.15a shows an example of how pre-Hispanic expression found its way into an open chapel in Tlalmanalco, built in 1560–64. When the chapel is being discussed as an example of symbolic syncretism, most studies today frequently focus on direct imports from the pre-Hispanic collection of signs, be it skulls, bones, or monkey-like figures. Indeed, these carved surfaces include all kinds of signs that are not Christian but might have seemed benign as mere ornaments. Traditional studies miss, as the Spaniards did four hundred years ago, that it was not the collection of explicit signs that infused this composition with indigenous thoughts—it was the spectrum of symbolic discernability.

The photograph at the top, Figure 2.15a, shows a fragment of decorations surrounding the space of the altar. The image below, Figure 2.15b, highlights certain fragments of the first picture. The sculptor of Tlalmanalco used a semi-Renaissance logic of composition to reestablish the pre-Hispanic openness of symbolic interpretations and to represent the traditional notion that gods, people, and plants create a representational continuity. Thus, the distinction between humans and vegetation is presented as a gradual transition. The small depiction of a human body highlighted in the upper right corner of Figure 2.15b marks the realistic end of the spectrum. Such sculpted figures are complete, their features proportional and fully revealed. Right below it, however, two highlighted fragments show a more ambiguous case. Two human heads grow out of a plant-like form, as if they were buds or flowers. The uninhibited merging of human and nonhuman forms is represented on the left side of the photograph. A large plant-like form dominates the main part of that rectangular area. At its top, the form starts to resemble a person. This hybrid shape, highlighted in Figure 2.15b, has arm-like branches and a strange head with geometric patterns in place of facial features. As if the shape of the head were in danger of being too explicit, two forms on

its sides, similar to the head in size, cause it to blend back into the organic pattern. This way of confusing perception is reminiscent of the walls of Uxmal (Figure 2.5a), for example. Tlalmanalco reveals the same effort to capture the moment when the mind deciphering a visual phenomenon is on the cusp between two different interpretations. A person capable of seeing these possibilities may easily transfer this way of thinking into the real vegetation surrounding the site, and thus follow the old patterns of the inclusive reading of the whole world. The Franciscan chapel also created an opportunity to expand the old frameworks of symbolic references into Christian iconography. For example, right below the big plant is the figure of a stylized angel embracing two humans with its spread wings. The angel resembles the plant-person above and blends with other organic forms. Perhaps because of their feathers, representations of angels strongly resonated with Mesoamerican sensitivities. This small hybrid sculpture is not intended to desecrate a Catholic symbol, however. In the inclusive world of indigenous ideas, an angel might have been understood in the most orthodox way while operating within a set of relationships that had nothing to do with dogma.

Examples of such a fusion of different modalities of symbolic thought exist in many sacral buildings in Mexico and Guatemala. To date, *Theaters of Conversion* provides one of the best accounts of these symbolic exchanges in architecture.



Figures 2.15a and 2.15b

Figure 2.16

Photographs by Jorge Pérez de Lara document examples ranging from paintings in San Miguel, Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, which are much more pre-Hispanic than Renaissance, to cases like that of a bleeding heart in San Salvador, Malinalco, where references to Catholic and pagan mythologies are perfectly doubled.[113] Similar cultural phenomena have been uncovered in various religious practices. Fernando Cervantes's discussion of diabolism in Mesoamerica, for example, resonates with my argument about the underlying representational logic of syncretism. He shows that, while the Catholic doctrine was grounded in and promoted a binary opposition of good and evil, only the devil was complex enough to engage those accustomed to the capricious ambiguity of pre-Hispanic deities (like Tezcatlipoca).[114] This is also why syncretism, as the manifestation of an indiscriminate attitude, was frequently equated with and persecuted as devil-worship. So-called "deviant" religions transferred their constitution of symbolic entities from pagan to Catholic representations. One of the best examples of such a practice was discovered in 1761 by Domingo de la Mota, who learned that an apparent true believer, Antonio Pérez, worshipped an unusual representation of Our Lady the Virgin. The statue was literally assembled from independent symbolic entities hidden inside it—like the statue of Coatlícue or the representational independence of human organs discussed above.[115]

Many aspects of these symbolic exchanges remain unknown because Western knowledge has privileged the understanding of only those aspects of cultural production that are specifically figurative, explicitly literal, and consciously intentional. That is why studies like Edgerton's emphasize the direct import of symbolic signs. Actual exchanges happened in a variety of ways frequently too subtle and/or subconscious to register within the Western epistemology. Figure 2.16 shows the dome of the cathedral in Puebla, Puebla, the traditional center of Catholic and colonial orthodoxy in central Mexico. Many domes of churches in Mesoamerica, including this one, are painted red. Unlike in the European tradition, many of them have exterior steps leading to the top. Although in Puebla that composition crowns

a seat of Catholic power, these are attributes of pre-Hispanic traditions; they recall the form of a sacred mountain, which had been traditionally represented as a pyramid with a small structure at its top. Regarded this way, the lantern resembles a pagan place of worship on a spherical pyramid containing a cave of the church interior below. Visitors to Mexico and Guatemala may be struck by the evocative massiveness of many Catholic churches. Even without any reddish color or so-called stylistic references to pre-Hispanic architecture, such buildings recall a traditional attitude toward symbolic environments. They seem to disregard European concerns about proportion and articulation of all architectural elements and instead test evocative qualities in the most elemental attributes of a built form. Especially in areas other than a front façade, these buildings resemble mounds of well-organized rocks or city walls with embankments. They recall those pre-Hispanic structures that were designed to engage the landscape and its topography. In the minds of local builders, such features must have been inseparable from thinking about any symbolic environment. Even if they had wanted to discuss with the friars how they understood their symbolic task, the modality of their thought would probably have been impossible to articulate or would have been lost in translation. The attempt to explicitly argue religious differences failed in 1524, at the very beginning of colonization. It was architecture—a representational production that always expresses and explores symbolic thought—that provided the means for the actual and continued dialogue.

Catholicism and Representational Practices of the Quiché Maya Today

Both the Catholic technologies of meaning control and an all-inclusive attitude toward symbolism persist in Mesoamerica. Figures 2.17a, 2.17b, 2.17c show the Easter procession of 2000 in Oaxaca, Mexico. The composite image shows how that religious parade was organized. It was a highly scripted event; its timing, locations, and ways of announcing the appropriate course of symbolic action and correct interpretations were precisely controlled.

The picture on the left, Figure 2.17a, shows how a designated person announces the location and meaning of the station. He holds up a sign with the name and an image illustrating the specific event of the Passion. Similar cardboard signs marking other stations were installed on the walls of buildings and lampposts. While this practice helped to discipline the physical movement of the procession, it is reminiscent of Valadés's discussion of mnemonic loci.[116] Pictures and text directly associated religious narratives with physical places, and in this way they turned the streets of Oaxaca into Calvary and the procession into a record of suffering. While Jesus and the Virgin Mary were both represented as full-size carved figures dressed specifically for the occasion, real people acquired characteristics typically

Figures 2.17a, 2.17b, and 2.17c

reserved for sculptures. Figure 2.17b shows that a young woman played the role of Saint Veronica. To leave no doubt about her designation, she carried and presented at all times the appropriate symbolic attribute—the linen cloth bearing the imprint of Jesus's face.

All over the Catholic world Easter processions are organized in a similar way. Nevertheless, this event was unusually bold in the way the control of the symbolic was exercised. The priest in charge (in the center of Figure 2.17b) spent most of his time making sure that Saint Veronica looked and acted precisely according to given instructions. The procession was supervised by a large group of hierarchically organized people, identifiable by their uniforms (some of them captured in Figure 2.17b). A strict line of command transmitted instructions from the leader to those who executed them. A separate small group, depicted in the image on the right (Figure 2.17c), almost independent of all the practical aspects of managing the event, observed and verified the correctness of this symbolic production. They carried a pile of documents, probably detailing what should be done and how. Not only were the timing and locations tightly regulated, the meaning of participants' roles in this performance were entirely scripted and rigidly enforced. People and full-size sculptures were treated in the same way, both correctly embellished and positioned in space to illustrate religious narratives. The general order was maintained by a group of young men dressed as militarized Boy Scouts. For a bystander, the spectacle revealed a degree to which the Catholic Church still has the ability to control symbolic meanings, a contemporary microcosm of religious techniques from the colonial times.

Easter celebrations in Mexico provide many such examples. While these performances are always scripted in terms of control of timing and the use of space, they also follow the oldest colonial techniques of representation. In the streets of cities like Taxco, full-size carved figures dressed in real clothes are carried as if they were marching. Large groups of people reenact the events of Holy Week. Local men dressed in the red and gold costumes of Roman

soldiers walk the streets looking for Jesus. During the culminating moment, two barefoot priests climb two ladders and lower the figure of Jesus down from the Cross. Such performances are accompanied by readings, leaving no doubt about the meaning of what the crowd observes. Meanwhile, dozens of penitents perform actual flagellations full of blood and sweat. As in the days when religious statues had to have glass eyes and real wigs, these performances ensure that the events and emotions of Easter are represented correctly and unequivocally.

As it did hundreds of years ago, another parallel symbolic reality still functions in many Mesoamerican communities. For example, in small towns around Lake Atitlán, Guatemala, the Maya people continue to use old dialects and maintain their identity in ways reminiscent of the most ancient traditions. Plate 9 shows a woman, probably with her children, in the market of Sololá. The small city is a secondary tourist attraction but an important administrative and trading center for the Maya descendants. Every Friday, locals come to the central square to exchange agricultural products and trade simple goods, especially clothes. Most indigenous people, but especially women, still wear costumes made of fabric produced on a traditional backstrap loom or with the help of a slightly more advanced treadle loom. As is characteristic of many small communities in Mesoamerica, clothes distinguish villages and regions. The color palette of Sololá is dominated by red and black. No one color ever dominates, however, and is designed to remain in measured balance with the complexity of patterns and other colors.

In the all-inclusive tradition of the Mayan modality of thought, continuing in Sololà, the most common aspects of daily life, including clothing, represented how a person is a part of the symbolic reality. Consider the skirts worn by the women in Plate 9, for example. They are almost always made of an uncut piece of clothing sewn together to make a loop, which, when folded, fits any size. Most intriguing is the pattern on their fabric, a sample of which is shown at the top of Plate 10. The less expensive skirts, like those shown in the picture, have line patterns made of white threads. More elaborate patterns, also shown in Plate 10, include other colors. From a distance, such a design looks like a set of vertical lines evenly spaced against a black or dark blue background. Although occasionally grouped in sets of two or three, they never dominate the background. In comparison to the black areas, these linear decorations are made of finer threads. The composition of each line demonstrates how well the weavers understand and construct this kind of wearable representation. Using a technique called ikat, individual threads—individual cords of cotton—are painted along their length in different colors in such a way that when placed side by side, the fragments of identical hue create forms. In Plate 10, this technique creates spots of white, yellow, green, or orange. In many cases, these forms are only one-thread wide. While lines of decorations

are easily discernable, their figurative constitution is not. It is clear that colored spots create more than formulaic geometric patterns, but only someone accustomed to deciphering the ambiguities of visual representation would fully perceive their relationships. These are neither realistic depictions nor abstract forms. They are both. The three small pictures at the bottom of Plate 10 show what might be observed if elements of the linear pattern were singled out and widened. The yellow figure clearly resembles a human body. The white form looks like a plant, maybe a tree, with an unusual boxy container intersecting its trunk. By unfolding the figures, it is easy to see that the picture (Plate 10) actually includes many of them. Still, the most intriguing is the small picture in the middle, the one with white, orange, and dark violet colors. It depicts the emergence of an orange entity from the white shell. Almost half of it is still within the container, and that part is drawn with delicate orange lines that resemble the white lines around them. Only the upper part, which has already emerged, acquires a visibility of solid shapes, resembling the figurative depiction of the yellow human body. All these lines of decorations and the figurative forms within them create a familiar spectrum of discernability. Some of their aspects, such as the pattern of vertical lines, are easy to perceive as overt features of the composition. Other images, human figures for example, work through resemblances and a measured degree of geometric distortion. Those forms that escape simple categories are the most evocative and create rich opportunities for symbolic interpretations. They imply the possibility of thinking about organic growth as a symbolic act that connects humans and vegetation. This space of representation is directly related to those in the painted books or the open chapel in Tlalmanalco. All sought symbolic value in visual evocation and processes of emergence. The representational continuities they created were so inclusive that they could bridge mythical beliefs and various aspects of everyday life. The clothes of women in Sololá also share key representational characteristics with the decoration of Uxmal: they transform the process of material making into symbolic production. Just as the stones creating the mask of the god Chac in Figure 2.5a are on the cusp of the distinction between figurative depiction and masonry construction, the forms represented on skirts in Sololá are equally informed by the logic of weaving and by mythical beliefs.

These kinds of representations are not designed to disguise pre-Hispanic ways of thinking. They function above and beyond what was restricted by the colonial authorities.[117] It seems that, in time, indigenous people discovered how easy it was to satisfy the superficial requirements of the Church while mixing in their own figurative imports and ways of thinking. In the world where the European and indigenous symbolic productions appeared to be separate and self-contained, the Amerindians ended up having the advantage of understanding both sides of this disjunctive reality. While the Spaniards relied on

military and economic power to suppress the colonized people, the Amerindians used representational practices to resist their enemies.

People who depend on performative acts to maintain their symbolic reality discovered representational opportunities even in Catholic holidays. They selectively identified symbolic routines that satisfied colonial expectations and those that were open to interpretation. The so-called dance of conquistadors, a traditional performance that accompanies some holidays in Guatemala and Mexico, provides a good example. Plate 11 shows the dance during the holiday of Santo Tomás, the Catholic patron of Chichicastenango, a town not far from Sololá. Native dancers dress in ostentatiously colonial outfits resembling the costumes of Spanish matadors or courtly attires. These costumes are covered with gold, silver, and small mirrors, creating a dazzling visual effect. The dark native complexion and exposed calves are concealed. The dancers wear masks over small face openings in their head covers. Each mask represents a strange mixture of obsessive realism and a hint of surreal irony. Like religious statues of the past, they are carved and painted with great precision, their facial features approximating the colonial Caucasian ideal. At the same time, their proportions are slightly distorted, to imply an awkward emotion, such as mindless contentment. Those figurative representations of Hispanic conquistadors move slowly, as if rehearsing pompous court routines. Their gestures are mechanical, repeated with obsessive correctness. In the midst of a chaotic crowd of local people they move as if following geometric patterns drawn on the ground. Two features of their dress violate colonial conventions. They wear sneakers, which is understandable considering that the week-long performance takes place on cobblestone streets. The sneakers strangely fit the hyper-expressive character of the costume. Even more curious are their hats, especially the volume of colorful feathers attached to them. Their size and brilliant colors far exceed those of Spanish apparel. The feathers of each hat—separately but especially when dancers are close together—create a dynamic volume of color, which draws attention even more than the glittering capes. The most nuanced gestures or the most refined set of steps are amplified by the movement of these headdresses. They seem to create a spectacle of their own far beyond that of courtly correctness. Feathers create endless and evocative combinations of shapes and hues. Their dynamic qualities are enhanced by the contrast with the static environment of architecture and the crowds of people mesmerized by these visual phenomena. This contemporary performance resembling those of pre-Hispanic times paradoxically reenacts a courtly dance by soldiers who helped destroy indigenous representations of Mesoamerica.

Historically, Chichicastenango has been an important cultural and religious center for the Quiché Maya.[118] According to Tedlock, "During the early colonial period the town of Quiché [the old capital of Quiché Maya] was eclipsed, in both size and prosperity,

Figures 2.18a and 2.18b

by the neighboring town of *Chuwi La'* or 'Nettles Heights,' otherwise known as Chichicastenango."[119] The only known phonetically transcribed book of creation, *Popol Vuh*, was preserved and later revealed to the Europeans there.[120]

Figures 2.18a and 2.18b show a fragment of the main market square in Chichicastenango, a place where local people still buy and sell but also a world-renowned tourist attraction. On Thursdays and Sundays, it accommodates busloads of foreigners and serves as an ethnic shopping mall, where visitors find plentiful and inexpensive goods. In support of the local economy, traditional local patterns have been altered to accommodate the tastes of gringos. The oldest and best-defined part of the town, the market square and its immediate surroundings, preserves pre-Hispanic features. The most important is the passage on its south end, the space framed by two churches: Iglesia de Santo Tomás on the east, in Figure 2.18a, and the smaller Capilla del Calvario on the west, depicted in Figure 24. This space is most frequently used to stage religious performances. Plate 11 and Figure 2.18a show ceremonies of the fiesta of Santo Tomás, a week-long holiday, which culminates on the twenty-first of December. Three figures of saints are carried between houses of appropriate *Cofradias,* religious brotherhoods, and paraded back to the center to be placed before the entry of the church of Santo Tomás. The statues are

shown in the center of Figure 2.18a during their final and most important procession. Each is a relatively orthodox manifestation of a Catholic saint, probably carved of wood and dressed in rich costumes for the occasion. During the fiesta they are placed on ceremonial litters, structures resembling those used to carry pre-Hispanic Maya lords. Elevated above the crowds, these sculptures almost blend into the field of decorations surrounding them. Each saint occupies a central position, like a heart, in a frame nearly five meters tall. These lightweight structures are embellished with colorful elements of artificial flowers, fruit, and mirrors. At the top of each box containing the Catholic figure is an elaborate semicircle of delicate but large and vibrantly colored feathers. These opulent compositions resemble ancient symbolic figures with their ceremonial headdress. As if performing a traditional dance, the feathers articulate the movements of those who carry them. At the end of the final procession, when Saint Thomas and his saintly companions stand on the elevated entry platform of the church and look down at the square, *cofrades,* the elders of the religious hierarchy, symbolically transfer power between *Cofradias*. They sit along the raised step on the southern edge of the square, in front of a museum located in the former communal center (the building on the left side of Figure 2.18b). The ceremony takes place in the same spot where the conquistadors of Plate 11 perform their symbolic dance earlier in the day. All these spatial practices show that the passage between Iglesia de Santo Tomás and Capilla del Calvario, with a grade change on its southern edge and the massive steps leading to the doorway of each church, play a special symbolic role. This is not coincidence because these architectural elements explicitly preserve pre-Hispanic representational attributes.

Figure 2.18b resembles Figure 2.6b depicting Tikal. Both include the grade change on the left and small elevated temples closing the perspective; both show a view from the entry of one temple looking in the direction of the other. As soon as such a similarity becomes thinkable, the comparison between the two places reveals even more intriguing issues. Iglesia de Santo Tomás and Capilla del Calvario create an unusual symbolic tension. It is difficult to find a similar spatial arrangement in European towns because, at the time when Mesoamerica was being colonized, freestanding Catholic churches followed a traditional rule of orientation—the main entry to a Catholic church was to face west. The main door of the Capilla del Calvario faces east. Precedents for two temples facing each other across an open space exist, however, in ceremonial cities of the Maya. The main plaza of Tikal is generally larger and its primary structures bigger in size, but its arrangement resembles that of the living town of Chichicastenango. In both cases, the regularity and flatness of the square creates an experience contrasting with their surroundings. Well-defined empty space is surrounded by more random structures and topography. In Tikal, the main plaza

was the only truly flat surface surrounded by hilly terrain. In Chichicastenango, although this is not immediately perceivable, the topography slopes down right behind the western and southern edge of the square, which transforms it into an elevated urban platform. Lines of steps connecting the two primary buildings along the edge of the flat floor have special significance in both centers. In Tikal they mark the location of stelae—symbolic markers of worship and commemoration—and in Chichicastenango they still help to stage religious and political ceremonies. Temples and their entries play a fundamental role. Both pre-Hispanic and Catholic, these sacred buildings are simple but monumental. Each façade stands on a mound of stones. Elevated and singular, the dark church door resembles the elevated opening—or mouth of a sacred mountain—in the pre-Hispanic past.

The interiors of both churches operate like ancient sacred caves. Especially Iglesia de Santo Tomás, despite its nominal function as a Catholic parish, shelters a hybrid mixture of orthodox and pagan religious practices.[121] Wooden platforms are frequently placed in the center of the nave to facilitate traditional offerings of flower petals and candles. To instill respect for ceremonies, a large multilingual announcement in the church requests that tourists not disturb local people performing them. Some of the most traditional practices revolve around the main entry and steps leading to the church. Figures 2.19a and 2.19b depict the space in front of the main entry to Iglesia de Santo Tomás and its immediate surroundings. The door, when open, was formerly off-limits for tourists, and only a few Maya were allowed to cross its threshold. The steps are frequently veiled in fragrant smoke produced by traditional offerings. People burn tree resins in tin cans, directly on the steps (as shown in Figure 2.18b) or in a designated burner, depicted in the lower right corner of Figure 2.19a. During holidays, the steps are covered with flowers sold there for offerings.

The relationship between steps leading to the main entry of Santo Tomás and the façade deserves special attention. The steps are made of local stone, and compared with similar spatial arrangements in European buildings they are overscaled and crude. As Figure 2.19a shows, they lack the rational precision of finishes typical of the Spanish colonial tradition; rather, they look like a natural geological formation. Consequently, the white façade and the stairway leading to its center create a tension. While the church elevation is explicitly different from the natural environment, the layered stones are both a human product and part of the preexisting natural conditions. Figure 2.19b shows that, like in Tikal, this small pyramidal platform is simultaneously an artifact and a natural hill; it creates a nascent symbolic figure, which constantly blends back with the topography. Especially on the edge, the steps literally unfold in response to topographic changes and merge with the land. Then, the delicate pattern of cobblestones continues the process. This condition strongly resonates with that of Figure 2.6a.

This set of perceptual characteristics strongly resembles pre-Hispanic spaces of representation, but the experiences include the Catholic frame of references. In the center of Chichicastenango, religions are woven together in what Michel de Certeau calls a palimpsest of relationships. Words, spatial practices, performative acts, architecture, and the land have been transformed into an environment where traditional symbolism "remains traced . . . illegible to the passerby," yet still essential for the lived-in reality.[122] Once again, material and visual forms—architecture in particular—helped the Maya satisfy the demands imposed by the Spaniards while at the same time tacitly opening them up to old symbolic concepts.

Figures 2.19a and 2.19b

The two churches in the center of Chichicastenango face each other because they were literally built on preexisting ceremonial structures. From the point of view of the winners, replacing a pagan temple with a church asserted religious dominance, but from the perspective of the colonized people it must have been another cycle in the endless process of reinterpreting representations of the mythical world. Consider Capilla del Calvario, whose religious designation emphasizes the importance of the mountain of Calvary (Golgotha)—another kind of sacred mountain—where Jesus was crucified. Perhaps this designation was selected because stories about the Catholic mountain triggered a strong response

among the Maya, or the Maya may have asked for this symbolic affiliation. Spanish strategies of conversion separated the techniques of attracting attention from the ways of teaching the dogma itself. If the Catholic missionaries who came to Chichicastenango shared the attitude of the original twelve Franciscan friars in Central Mexico, they would have taken any native interest in the mountain of Calvary as a sign of genuine interest in the Passion. It is also likely that the same mechanism was at play when the Quiché Maya agreed to accept Santo Tomás as their new patron. According to Daniel Matul, not only was the church of Santo Tomás built on the site of an ancient temple, it was the temple of Hunahpu, one of the mythical twins.[123] If accurate, such information opens a rich field of possibilities for overlaps between pre-Hispanic and Catholic religious references. The history of Christian theology associates Saint Thomas the Apostle with a set of texts identifying him as a twin.[124] The Bible refers to Saint Thomas three times as the one called Didymus, which in Greek means a twin.[125] The most heretical version of Saint Thomas's identity claims that he was the twin brother of Jesus. [126] This symbolically charged overlap seems hardly accidental. It is difficult to tell if the controversy surrounding the identity of Saint Thomas the Apostle might have been known to Maya elders in 1540, when the main church was constructed, and how such information might have influenced the decision to designate him as the religious patron of the town. But the fact remains that out of many possible choices, the inhabitants of the religious center of Quiché Maya selected and still celebrate the saint called "the twin" and that he resides over the sacred place of the pagan twin. The overlaps between Catholic and Mayan stories were so potent that it might have been enough for the Maya to glimpse that forbidden narrative to recognize the complexity they needed to merge different kinds of symbolism. This field of verbal correlations and ambiguous distinctions operates like the representational structure of pre-Hispanic painted books. At the end it does not really matter whether the ancient stories in Aramaic were fully known or whether they functioned as heretical gossip in Mesoamerica. In the world of the Maya, the possibility of an evocative play of meanings inherently constituted symbolic value. It should not be surprising that the Maya found themselves at home in such a hybrid and ambiguous space of representation.

Knowing that the missionaries uncritically embraced almost any symbolic form or practice that helped capture the attention of indigenous people while having no apparent bearing on religion, it is likely that an attachment to Saint Thomas that the Quiché Maya might have expressed justified the naming of the church. As a result, both sides of this symbolic encounter perceived the symbolic reality of Chichicastenango the way they wanted: the Spaniards saw Catholic churches as successfully replacing Mayan temples while the Maya might have seen another incarnation of their powerful twins who, once again, managed to outwit the lords of the underworld.

In *Popol Vuh,* the story of mythical twins ends when one of the initial two becomes the maize or the god of maize capable of perpetual rebirth, and the other symbolically marks the place of death or sacrifice. Tedlock says that "to this day, Hunahpu days are set aside for the veneration of the dead, and cemeteries are called by the same word (*jom*) as the ball courts [places of sacrifice] of the Popol Vuh."[127] That is why the burial ground in Chichicastenango functions as another site of representational exchanges. Plate 12 shows that, as a place of the dead, it seems too colorful or joyful for the Catholic tradition. Blue-green is the color of the primordial sea and sky, and symbolically one of the most important of all colors in the Mayan tradition. The tombs of richer families simultaneously accommodate these two seemingly exclusive kinds of representation to an amazing degree. Many structures in Plate 12 look like miniature European churches. Their elevations are composed of columnar pilasters and arched openings. Their gables correctly repeat baroque patterns. The tectonic articulation of these elements is strict, and they are well-proportioned. And yet, as if color belonged to a symbolically sheltered realm, they are painted over in ways inadmissible in the tradition of European churches and chapels.

Native representations in all their forms accept symbolic conflicts and inconsistencies. Even the most significant rituals of the Santo Tomás holidays coexist with popular forms of entertainment, for example. Loud music, commercial activities, even sexually charged performances may happen side-by-side with the most sacred rites. These practices—material, visual, performative, or verbal— represent a symbolic reality reaching far beyond European models of control. Their seemingly subversive complexity is not the result of any conspiracy, however. They emerged from a unique encounter of different modalities of thought. The Spaniards and Amerindians took for granted what appeared familiar or seemed obvious, each using their own culturally grounded perception of reality, and, without any official consensus or statement of policy, they created a symbolic environment together. What the missionaries considered to be a mere practical distinction between ways of increasing the attractiveness of new ideas and the actual religious teaching the Amerindians perceived as another version of symbolic duality, the most fertile ground for symbolic production. Architecture and visual forms had the power to admit various concepts of reality and negotiate their content in a nonverbal way. In this part of the world, the representational dynamism of such processes privileged the pre-Hispanic modality of thought. Amerindians were accustomed to dealing with ambiguity and an extreme complexity of relationships—a skill almost antithetical to and thus unperceivable within the Spanish systems of symbolic domination.

These symbolic phenomena have escaped traditional scholarly methods because the history of the conquest and colonization of Mesoamerica was recorded according to the way

the first missionaries understood the New World. Traditional books about architectural history, those establishing classificatory grids of formal styles, clarifying continuities of their evolution, or explaining deterministic causes for the way buildings look, perpetuate this obsolete model of knowledge. Those historians of art and culture like Olivier Debroise, who free themselves from the obligation to establish such continuities, discover that "Mexican culture is defined by a series of missed encounters and misunderstandings (for syncretism is nothing if not these)."[128] The complexities of pre-Hispanic and colonial traditions have been explored in the most insightful ways by artists who reach directly to representational practices of the past. Works of Francisco Toledo, for example, recall or rival the best ancient examples I have discussed. Not only does he—a true Zapotec—explore the symbolic and sexual charge in the organic world, but he also moves beyond that tradition and tests the cultural exchanges themselves. He has looked critically into the phenomena of European art of the colonial era, including the issue of evocative ambiguity in the works of Albrecht Dürer and the symbolic traditions of Mexican Catholicism.

Jacopo da Testera's wall will separate the world of Western knowledge and the living world of symbolic practices in Mesoamerica so long as academic scholarship preserves assumptions like those that guided the missionaries. Concepts of verbal communication and information are insufficient to study the cultural production of that region. Religious thought and the sense of identity of the indigenous people in Mesoamerica reach far beyond the verbal constructs and epistemological systems of the West. Even if colonizers desperately wanted to believe it, language has never been the primary medium of shaping and interacting with symbolic reality there. Thus, those who, like Toledo, perceive unique structures in nonverbal production may explore a fuller spectrum of cultural phenomena from Mesoamerica. Architecture and visual practices will be among the most potent sources of such insights in the future.

3 Structures of Tolerance and Religious Domination

What does it mean to dismiss a building as provincial architecture? Most likely, it implies that it lacks certain features characteristic of so-called high culture, that is, its design is not sufficiently aligned with the stylistic principles of the ideology that dominated that region or nation. Provincial phenomena are usually seen as synonymous with the peripheries of political and intellectual influence. Location alone is not sufficient, however, to discount a building. Even if built in a cultural center, a structure may be deemed inferior if its designers seem to have misunderstood proper rules, lacked technical expertise, or seemingly could not synthesize broad intellectual issues. There are unlikely to be such examples in traditional surveys of architectural history. Canons of monuments are grounded in the epistemological assumption that, throughout history and across the world, only intellectual elites produced architecture of superior conceptual integrity. Not surprisingly, the locations of those monuments coincide with historical centers of political and/or ideological power. Such an assumption dismisses not only other buildings but also, and more importantly, the whole spectrum of architectural thought that functioned outside of the dominant structures of control. The winner's perspective covered up, for example, the representational phenomena of coexistence—nondominant relationships and diverse beliefs. It also means that we are likely to overlook architectural manifestations of emerging thought, those nascent phenomena that are as plentiful as they are experimental. Even in cases of well-known and stylistically orthodox buildings, traditional history has primarily registered those attributes that explicitly affirmed dominant trends. Altogether, this kind of attitude has highlighted the stable symbolism and silenced the dynamic aspects of architecture.

However, certain buildings, which the traditional history of architecture considers provincial phenomena or stylistically conflicted, actually played a significant role in the processes of shaping the identity of multicultural and religiously diverse states in Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. It was exactly the inconclusive and/or subversive character of the ideas these buildings represented that questioned the status quo of the relationship between politics and religion. They served as sites where the struggle over the control of symbolic thought took place. If their compositions are perceived as imperfect or eccentric today, it is because the architecture of the Counter-Reformation

rendered them illegible. Strategies that won that symbolic battle in the past extend their power to contemporary epistemological practices and keep covering up the representational and political complexity of architecture of that time. Architecture in the Commonwealth of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, especially when read against seemingly better-known architectural examples of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, provides a unique insight into these insufficiently explored processes.

Architecture in the Time of the Reformation in the Commonwealth of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

Examples of Polish or Lithuanian buildings rarely figure in the history of European architecture. Such buildings, especially those constructed before the eighteenth century and not associated with the Counter-Reformation, seem to be strangely imperfect. Their stylistic features are neither pure, nor elemental or consistent. Frequently, the core of their conceptual integrity is obfuscated by later additions as if nobody cared for the original concept. Praised for their picturesque qualities, the buildings of that time often look like a collection of elements and design principles.

Figure 3.1 shows a fragment of the Cathedral in Kraków. This religious structure belongs to Wawel, the residence of Polish kings and the center of administrative power until 1596. This was a royal site, the burial ground for Polish kings, a place of ceremonies essential to the symbolic maintenance of the state. Yet, this architecture conveys a tendency to accumulate diverse elements dating from Gothic to baroque rather than bringing a holistic order to them. Those who accept that architecture is frequently determined by its preexisting conditions would probably explain this compilation of architectural additions as a consequence of limited space, insufficient to support more consistent design efforts. It seems, however, that in Poland, before the success of the Counter-Reformation, this kind of architectural complexity was not only unavoidable, it was prevalent across the land, a common way of thinking about built environments.

The geographical location of Poland undoubtedly contributed to these processes. The eastern edge of Poland, the border of the Latin West since the Middle Ages, was mostly a wooded lowland. As such, it exposed the country to military invasions but also encouraged cultural and commercial exchanges with its eastern neighbors. From the very beginning of Polish history, religious and political alliances played a crucial role in establishing military equilibrium across that permeable border. Thus, the conversion of Vladimir the Great, the ruler of Kievan Rus, in 988 to the Orthodox religion (a decision that consequently made the

Figure 3.1

Russian Empire the heir of the Byzantine glory and ambition) was prompted by the expansion of Latin domination into all of Eastern Europe. That threat became more apparent in 966, after the conversion of Mieszko, the Polish leader, to Catholicism. Different religious affiliations did not translate into the ideological polarization of the neighboring nations, however. Until approximately 1500, the territories east of the Wisła river were scarcely populated and underdeveloped. Even after administrative centers pledged allegiance to one of the two competing religious powers of Europe, the Kingdom of Poland to Rome and the Kievan Rus with the Duchy of Halicz-Vladimir to Constantinople, the eastern periphery created a gray zone where leaders of smaller centers chose and/or changed religious affiliations depending on the current political situation. That was possible because in many areas common people never had to abandon their ancient rites. According to Jerzy Kłoczowski, in the fourteenth century the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, occupying land along almost the entire eastern border of Poland, was the last mostly pagan state in Europe.[1] Even that late into the religious polarization of Eastern and Western Christendom and despite strong family ties to Orthodox Christianity, the rulers of the Duchy lived in paganism and treated the prospect of conversion as a political tool useful primarily to gain or restructure power in this part of Europe.[2] Jogaila (Jagiełło, Jagello, Jagal, or Jagiello), one of the brightest politicians leading this multireligious state, established strong ties with eastern provinces of Poland and managed to convince others that the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were compatible enough to function under one ruler. In 1386, Ladislaus (the Latin name given to him at his Christian baptism) Jogaila was crowned king of Poland as Władysław Jagiełło and thus established a new dynasty and a personal union between the two states.

Citizens of Lublin, which is located approximately halfway between the two capitals, Kraków and Vilnius (Vilna, Wilno), were instrumental in setting up the political alliance.[3]

Actually, Lublin's function as a political site of negotiations continued far beyond the time of Władysław Jagiełło. When the alliance matured almost two centuries later, in 1569, the final document legalizing the Commonwealth of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was signed in Lublin too.

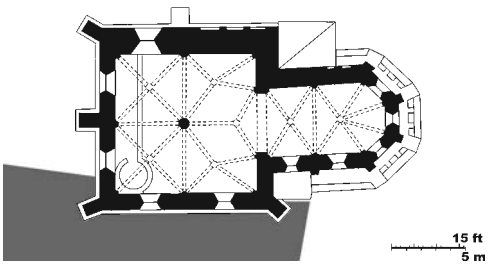
The town was also a place of another kind of negotiation, a symbolic engagement between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. The two religious systems were still in political conflict, but in that part of Europe their coexistence was a fact of everyday life. In a way, the union—especially its symbolic dimension—was defined by these difficult religious issues, and Władysław Jagiełło designated the Holy Trinity Chapel (Kaplica Świętej Trójcy) at the Royal Castle in Lublin as an explicit site of such a representational encounter.[4] Although the first record referring to the chapel dates from 1326, the date of its completion is not known. Some historians believe that the final phase of the building construction coincided with the time when Jagiełło became king of Poland.[5]

The Holy Trinity Chapel is a small structure consisting of two interior volumes stacked vertically, the main hall above and the crypt below. It seems to be a building with a split symbolic personality, one in which Western and Eastern concepts of religious space of representation create a tension. While the structural solution and spatial articulation are Gothic, the interior decorations are Russian-Byzantine. The paintings were commissioned by Władysław Jagiełło and finished in 1418. Plate 13 shows the multiplicity of colors and density of figurative compositions in that relatively small space. They form a tapestry of religious iconography totally surrounding a believer. This visual immersion effect is enhanced by its stark contrast with the memory of the building's austere brick exterior. As in many Orthodox interiors of Byzantine Greece, the Balkans, or Russia, in Lublin, a person's vision and imagination become wrapped in religious imagery. Such an experience resembles the way the Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas, discussed in chapter 1, foregrounded visual phenomena and hid the material reality of the building. In the Holy Trinity Chapel, figurative compositions cover all the walls, floating against the bluish background. Lines painted on vertical surfaces create areas for individual images, and they only loosely relate to Gothic features such as the shapes of walls or the placement of windows and doors. The multiplicity and arrangement of paintings defy the physicality of the walls. Still, Plate 13 shows that the Gothic elements of structure are strongly articulated. It reveals, for example, how the ribs of the vaulted ceiling collect forces of gravity and distribute them into walls. As I have suggested, Gothic treatment of structure was one of the most explicit departures from the Byzantine modalities of thought. In the interior of Saint-Denis, the symbolism of color and phenomena created by stained glass related to the Byzantine tradition and they

were separated from the logic of the material structure, which in turn represented a new ideal order—a rational perfection in a technical solution. In Lublin, the two kinds of symbolism that separated the Christian East and West coexist again. Structural ribs are covered with colorful patterns. Such added appearance is not meant to diminish their materiality and blend them with the bluish background. They remain strongly discernable and only acquire those visual characteristics that allow them to function like lines painted on walls. In effect, the ribs organize the vaults just as the flat borders divide the vertical surfaces.

Anna Różycka-Bryzek, an expert on the chapel's paintings, whose studies focus on the symbolic program—a taxonomy of figurative depictions and their positioning in the chapel—concluded that, while the system is of Byzantine origin, its execution was compromised by an incompatibility with the Gothic building.[6] If one approaches this issue differently, not as a matter of unfortunate conflict producing stylistic imperfection but rather as a representational experiment intended to test a hybrid concept of religious space, other features of the chapel gain relevance. In Lublin, agreements between Western and Eastern symbolic systems seem as meaningful as the articulation of their differences. Gothic and Byzantine legacies, if considered not as sets of rules but rather ways of thinking, create the strongest tension in the center of the chapel.

While Byzantine churches were primarily composed around the central naos and its vertical axis, Gothic churches emphasized a horizontal procession toward the main altar. These two layouts were reinforced by different distribution of daylight. Figure 3.2a, a plan of the chapel in Lublin, shows that it is a small structure in which only the presbytery implies the horizontal directionality of the space. The footprint of the main hall is square and thus similar to Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, on the western outskirts of Lithuania, the Gothic style was also used in Orthodox churches. Often their size and layout were similar to that of the Holy Trinity Chapel, with one exception: their central space was structured by four columns and thus the very center of the church remained empty.[7] Four columns in the center are characteristic of the Russian Orthodox church model, where the central space is taller and infused with light coming through windows of a large lantern above, a solution clearly reminiscent of the light phenomena in the Katholikon in the monastery of Hosios Loukas. That experiential quality of light captured at the top of the church interior functioned as the most immaterial representation of divinity. In contrast, Figure 3.2b shows that, in the Holy Trinity Chapel, its central space is occupied by the most material and technically explicit of building elements—a column, which reveals how human ingenuity transferred forces of gravity from the ceiling to the ground. This representational shift redirects thoughts away from the Byzantine vertical



Figures 3.2a and 3.2b

progression of symbolic hierarchy and toward the Western symbolic progression to the altar as the symbolic center.[8] This is a radical juxtaposition of two modalities of religious thought. In the symbolic center of a Byzantine space of visual representation, an ephemeral phenomenon is replaced by a material statement of rational ingenuity.

As in the case of Saint-Denis, differences between these two ways of constituting religious symbolism were so profound and politically charged that, according to pure architectural principles, an interior like this should have never been completed. But it exists. The Holy Trinity Chapel is not a compromised or imperfect space of representation. Nor was the juxtaposition of the Byzantine and Latin ways of symbolic ordering meant to dominate or subvert the principles of either belief. The chapel is a material manifestation of thought seeking new ways to identify and deal with schismatic divisions within European Christianity. This royal place of worship reflects a way of thinking that is not ignorant of differences but rather refuses to follow centuries-old patterns of constructing ideological conflict for political reasons. All relevant principles of religious thought are acknowledged, but none of them is allowed to dominate the whole spectrum of experiences. Nor does this space of representation manifest a new religious program. Despite renewed political efforts to reconcile Eastern and Western Christianity, no architectural pattern of this new kind existed.[9] The union of the two states in the person of their ruler was not meant to homogenize its people. Rather, the chapel was to explore symbolic interactions among different nations and their beliefs. An almost complete Gothic structure created a rich opportunity for such an engagement. It helped to reveal the potency in

coexistence without domination.[10] What might have been a common practice of people living together on the border between Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was represented here as a religious environment. The fact that in today's studies, such as those of Anna Różycka-Bryzek, the Holy Trinity Chapel in Lublin appears inconsistent or conflicted reflects only the degree to which the epistemological logic of the traditional history of art dismisses value in such representational experiments.

Figure 3.3

The architecture of the Holy Trinity Chapel also reveals that this tolerant attitude toward symbolic representation continued in the following centuries. Figure 3.3 shows that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a late-Renaissance gable and decoration of the elevated door were added to the chapel's exterior.[11] The way of thinking that turned the building's interior into a representational test of coexistence persisted in Lublin. Thus, a decision to add a new order to the Gothic and Russian-Byzantine mixture seems only to build on the centuries-old tradition. This small alteration of a Gothic chapel is only symptomatic of profound and unique cultural processes that took place on the border between Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In addition to the mixture of Poles, Ruthenians (today's Ukrainians), Belorussians, Russians, and Lithuanians who always inhabited the eastern peripheries of Poland, many Jews persecuted in other European countries found refuge in the Kingdom of Poland, dating back to the end of the eleventh century. Smaller groups representing other cultures and religions, be it Karaites accepting only the Old Testament, Monophysitic Armenians, or Islamic Lithuanian Tartars, settled on these peripheries of Europe as well. The biggest influx of people into the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however. Lublin, at that time, was home to Poles, Russians, Armenians, Germans, Scots, Italians, and Magyars.[12] The immigration of foreigners was

caused primarily by religious wars and persecution triggered in Europe by the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Soon after Luther declared his ideas as a theological antidote for the corruption in the Catholic ecclesiastical institutions and called for reestablishing the Bible as the primary and unmediated source of religious knowledge, the Reformation became an utter political and military struggle.[13] Everyday persecutions of individuals and communities paralleled military battles. The use of force was justified on both sides of this ideological barricade. While the Holy Inquisition cruelly punished any departure from Catholic dogma and any idea threatening the power of Rome, Luther and Calvin supported, for example, the death penalty for those who followed Anabaptism, which they considered a heresy dangerous to the existing social order. After the initial phase, when religious beliefs were not completely aligned with politics, *cuius regio, eius religio* (the religion of the ruler is the religion of the land) became the principle exercised by Catholic and Protestant leaders alike. Persecuted and desperate people searched for a new home, and many of them found it in Poland and Lithuania. Many historians say that it was the weakness of the office of king in combination with the legacy of freedoms given to *szlachta* (gentry)—unusual for Europe at that time—that made this kingdom a fertile ground for the diversity of religious confessions. Indeed, many royal anti-Reformation rulings, for example the early decrees of Zygmunt Jagiellończyk, were harsh on paper but unenforceable.[14] Others believe that the spread of reformed religions was motivated politically, especially in the case of Lithuania.[15] Still others see this phenomenon as directly related to the two-hundred-year-old political coexistence of the two different states under one dynasty. All these factors contributed to turning the commonwealth into what papal officials called *asylum hereticorum* (heretics' safe haven).[16] Polish history has frequently presented the process of increasing freedoms, including religious ones and especially for szlachta, at the expense of the integrity of the state as the core problem that, in the following centuries, led to the partitioning of the country. The political and cultural phenomena of that time in the commonwealth require a different kind of insight in order to uncover a different, a more complex, view of that reality.

Unquestionably, the time of the Reformation energized both states of the commonwealth in intellectual, artistic, and political terms. In 1543, Polish astronomer Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus) published *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres)* and thus redefined the place of humanity in the astronomical universe.[17] Multiple theological and political publications generated in the commonwealth belong to the most progressive discourses of the Reformation. Not only Christians participated in such religious disputes. These exchanges also included Jewish thinkers, like Isaac Ben Abraham, a Karaite from Troki, Lithuania, who wrote *Chizzuk Emunah (Faith Strengthened).*

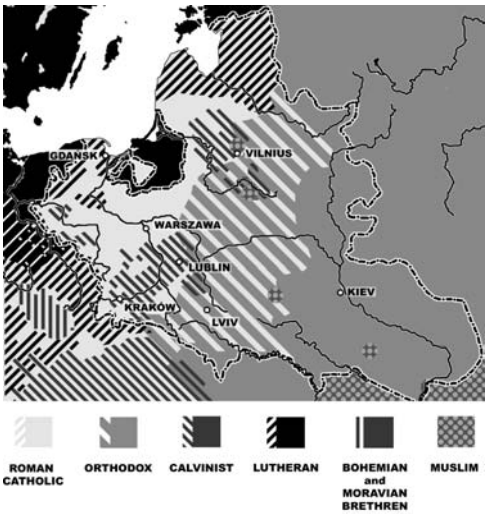


Figure 3.4

The openness of intellectual life not only supported a diverse education but also brought new life to literature, poetry, and music. People inhabiting the two united states were of diverse cultural backgrounds and openly differing in their religious beliefs and political convictions. Together they were on their way to strengthen a state based on principles of tolerance. One of the brightest chapters in the history of the commonwealth is the Compact of Warsaw. While in other countries of Europe Roman Catholicism and the Protestant religions struggled for domination in bloody battles and persecutions, in 1573—five months after and partly in response to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in France—religious tolerance was legally asserted in Poland and Lithuania by the Compact of Warsaw, in Latin called *Pax Dissidentium* (The Peace of Those Who Differ). It guaranteed tolerance to all religions coexisting in Poland.[18]

Figure 3.4 shows the complex distribution of different confessions in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the end of the sixteenth century.[19] While in most European countries Protestants competed for followers almost exclusively with the Catholic Church, sometimes in the presence of Jewish communities, rarely did such environments include Orthodox Christianity and other Eastern religions.[20] The map in Figure 3.4 is too diagrammatic to reflect to what degree all new and old beliefs were intertwined across the whole territory of the commonwealth but it shows their general grouping. Thus, the eastern borders were dominated by Orthodox believers. In large portions of Lithuania and eastern Poland they coexisted primarily with Roman Catholics. Many people living in the northern and western regions of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, lands with strong ties to Hanseatic and German towns, leaned toward Lutheranism. Calvinism, popular across the southern and southwestern borders of the commonwealth, found its supporters mostly in the area between Kraków and Lublin, around Vilnius, and in multiple smaller pockets in Poland and Lithuania. The complex layout of areas marked by the hatching of parallel lines in Figure 3.4 indicates the coexistence of different and well-represented religious beliefs. In many cases three or more Christian confessions were practiced in the same region. As far as social and cultural issues are concerned, Lutheranism appealed to

nobility, szlachta, and the urban classes, especially of German origin. Although critical of the Roman ecclesiastical institutions, it promoted self-discipline and respect for an existing civil order. In its centers, Gdańsk (Danzig, Dantzig) for example, this new confession brought power and prosperity to merchants and manufacturers and a significant degree of political independence within the political system of the commonwealth.[21] Apart from the fact that Catholicism was not marginalized, Lutheranism in the northern and western region of the commonwealth brought social and political changes similar to those in northern Germany and countries of northern Europe in general.

The history of Calvinism in the commonwealth presents a more unique picture. In the West, mainstream Calvinism appealed strongly to social forces of the progessive change. It combined Protestant theology with an emphasis on active life and equated economic prosperity with God's blessing. The way Calvinism appealed to the people of Lithuania and eastern Poland seems different, however. It attracted the whole spectrum of believers living next to or converting from Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Calvin probably never saw an Orthodox church; his *l'Institution de la religion chrétienne* even included an uninformed and condescending remark about "Greek Christians."[22] Nevertheless, he was deeply interested in the representation of the divine as the fundamental theological issue, and this resonated with the religious sensitivity of all people whose beliefs were grounded in the Byzantine tradition. Similar to the Christological argument of iconoclasm, though arguing against religious icons, he distinguished between the unrepresentable God the Father and everything else perceivable to the human senses and mind.[23] Moreover, in his criticism of Catholic churches as material and political expressions of the corrupt Roman ecclesiastical order, Calvin promoted a concept of the true temple—a mental construct of faith and imagination—and such an idea must have appealed to Eastern Orthodoxy.[24] After all, they lived in the Byzantine tradition in which spirituality was also related to interconnections between faith and imagination. Consequently, regions around Vilnius, Lublin, and Kraków, areas on the edge between Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, attracted and produced vibrant communities of Calvinist Protestants. In Lithuania, as Antanas Musteikis notes, "by the second half of the sixteenth century the . . . higher nobility, for all intents and purposes, was Protestant," primarily following the teachings of Calvin.[25] In the commonwealth, as in other progressive parts of Europe, religious upheaval coincided with economic prosperity and the outburst of artistic production and intellectual life, including the most socially and politically radical discourses. During the synod of 1565, the Calvinist community broke into two camps: Calvinism proper, so-called *Zbór Większy*, favored mostly by szlachta and nobility, and *Zbór Mniejszy*, of more socially progressive *Arianie* (Arians, also known as *Bracia*

Polscy, Polish Brethren, or *Socynianie,* Socinians, after Faustus Socinus).[26] Among Protestant communities, all of which created intellectual centers with their own educational systems and often their own printing facilities, Arianie deserve special attention. The confession, preaching social justice as an extension of religious principles and an opposition to any use of force, attracted representatives of the forward-looking szlachta and large numbers of burghers. Their religious and intellectual center was in Raków, a small town in Małopolska that became known throughout Europe, but their communities existed in many other towns, including influential groups in Lublin and Kraków, where Socinus lived.[27] The discourse they generated and their moral courage earned Arianie a place among the most progressive intellectual and social movements of Europe in the sixteenth century. Altogether, at the end of the century, the number of Protestant congregations in the commonwealth was quite high: 260 Calvinist and 52 Arian in Małopolska, 37 Polish and 120–40 German Lutheran in Wielkopolska, 191 Calvinist in Lithuania.[28] They coexisted with Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Jews, and representatives of other religions and confessions. It was this politically open and intellectually vibrant environment that attracted dissenters from other European countries and energized the most progressive forces of the commonwealth.

While the number of publications concerning the religious, political, and literary phenomena of the Reformation in Poland and Lithuania increases, the nonverbal production of that part of Europe remains insufficiently explored. Many historians acknowledge that, in the commonwealth during the late Renaissance, architects designed significant buildings. Yet, something about those symbolic practices escapes all classificatory efforts. It may appear paradoxical that Polish architecture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, those buildings that were constructed by people living in the most diverse cultural and religious environment in the history of Poland, became an emblem of Polishness. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was fashionable to search for a national style, certain decorative attributes, those originating from that multicultural state, became synonymous with the uniquely "Polish style."[29] Moreover, what some consider a culturally seminal set of architectural features others frequently classify as mannerism, that is, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "a style that is characterized by artificiality and artiness, by a thoroughly self-conscious cultivation of elegance and technical facility, and by a sophisticated indulgence in the bizarre."[30] Artificiality and essentialism are antonymous, and bizarre forms of expressions rarely end up serving as emblems of national identity. In truth, this conflicted attitude hides a much more complex set of political issues that were silenced with the help of architecture, and that is why the symbolic constitution of buildings may help to uncover them.

In the Commonwealth of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the buildings called late Renaissance and/or mannerist, those built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, seem to share certain characteristics. Their designers favored compositions that used imported features of high styles selectively, allowing inconsistencies in ordering and subverting these pure elements and patterns. It is as if by creating unusual relationships among them, architects could test the limits or flexibility of these principles. This was especially common in additions or expansions. In cases like Lublin's chapel shown in Figure 3.3, a new Renaissance gable and Gothic building exist independently as far as compositional principles are concerned. Other than overall dimensions, no effort was made to establish formal relationships between the old and new parts. This triangular girded pattern of pilasters and cornices with arcades filling empty areas rests indifferently on top of the Gothic structure. Still, the juxtaposition seems not to express much of a conflict.

In other examples, older medieval buildings create more intricate interactions with new structures. One good example is the town hall in Chełmno (Kulm), in a region with a rich multicultural and multireligious history.[31] The building, shown in Figure 3.5a, resulted from an alteration of a medieval two-story structure. Like many other Polish town halls of that time, in 1567–72 it was expanded vertically to include the addition of an elaborate Renaissance parapet—decorations hiding the roof. [32] As Figure 3.5a shows, these decorations included a row of columns supporting a modulated crown-like top.[33] While the overall massing maintains the Italian Renaissance simplicity of the well-proportioned box with a three-floor division, this is not an example of the Italian Renaissance. The decorations of the parapet seem almost excessive, and the whole composition of the elevation is strangely unstable. Yet, it does not appear chaotic. The numbers of openings—three doors at the ground level, five windows at the second floor, and eight bays of the third level—are not easy to reconcile geometrically. The doors, which most likely belonged to the medieval structure, are not aligned with the layout of upper-floor windows.[34] Each horizontal strip of the façade associated with a floor has its own compositional regularity and, to a certain degree, exists independently of the other two. They are similar in height but different in articulation and character. Each of the three horizontal bands has an element in its center, a door at the bottom, a window on the second floor, and a column at the top. If aligned, which was likely according to their intrinsic rules, these elements would have created a strong central line of symmetry. The window in the center, however, is shifted slightly away from its expected position, just enough to subvert the possibility of total symmetry.

Not just a single window, many elements of this building subvert expected rules. Figure 3.5b shows a fragment of the side elevation. It exemplifies how relationships of elements

and their individual character defy ideal patterns of Italian Renaissance. The image shows what appears to be a loose collection of pieces. Alignments are only local and the whole composition accommodates a variety of formal reasoning. The parapet columns bear little resemblance to their classical predecessor. Each column shaft challenges the classical notion of fluting. With only two large grooves carved, fluting no longer refers to its classical pattern. To add to this play of exaggerations, the columns are awkwardly placed in front of niches. Frequently a weak or empty element follows or supports a strong one. Alternately, pieces seem structural and purely decorative, as if this distinction was impossible. The element in the center of the illustration refers to a traditional decoration of a window but it does not frame an opening. It is placed on a flat surface of the wall and thus looks like a piece of irrational decoration suspended from the cornice above. Multiple other elements were designed to toy with conventions. In this building, as much effort was made to establish compositional relationships as to not allow any such rules to dominate all parts.

It is possible that the tower added later, in 1589–95(7), when bishops attempted to reassert their power, was meant to counteract the subversive character of this composition. Yet, altogether, these elevations do not look conflicted and seem content with both agreements and disagreements of their

Figures 3.5a and 3.5b

Figure 3.6

parts. In the region where the balance of powers between the Catholic bishop, an established community of burghers, and new Protestant immigrants was essential, this was an architectural exploration of that difficult order of coexistence.[35] The town hall, a physical manifestation of self-governance, helped to make these symbolic issues thinkable. Windows and doors do not represent people figuratively, but rather the composition in Chełmno became a visual and abstract exercise in thinking about the construction of a nonhierarchical order.

Architectural expression of orders was also tested in sacral buildings in various regions of the commonwealth. For example, in 1609–15(7), in Lviv (Lwów, Lvov, Lemberg, L'viv), the Boim family funded a Catholic chapel celebrating Christ's Passion. Figure 3.6 shows its elevation. The façade, mostly known for its profuse and well-carved decorations, has a two-story high trabeated system of columns and beams/cornices. As soon as such a compositional logic appears in one's mind, this elevation reveals a spectrum of inconsistencies. Only in the center does this classical alignment, derived from elemental rules of construction, carry through. Other columns of the second floor are missing, leaving only the

base blocks to support the sculpted figures. The ground floor windows imply the necessity of a structural element in their centers, but instead one finds only fragments of strangely tapered pilasters suspended from capitals. The window arches are too tall for the Western tradition and rather resemble Orthodox or Islamic architecture. As far as the relationship between the structure and decorations is concerned, the elevation of the ground level seems to follow basic Renaissance principles. Its articulation of the trabeated system is rational, following the logic of physical forces, while sculpted decorations occupy nonstructural spaces. In contrast, the second floor level is treated like a canvas. Human figures and strange organic forms flow freely, taking their position in front of or above the elements of a conventional façade. This is all possible because the elevation is primarily constructed as a bearing wall, not as a trabeated frame. Even in the ground level, the stone columns are redundant, added to the self-supporting wall for reasons other than structural necessity. Technically, such a system transforms the elevation into a painting-like composition in which sculptural and structure-like figures may interact freely. Figure 3.7 is a modified photograph recording the approximate frontal view of the upper-left fragment of the elevation shown in Figure 3.6. In such a view, it becomes apparent that the façade consists of compositional layers that are not aligned. In the back, the darkest region in Figure 3.7, is the implied superstructure of monumental pilasters. Almost indiscernible in the lower level, they are strongly articulated on both edges at the top of the building. The implied frame they create is filled by a blank surface, glimpses of which are revealed in the upper level. In front of that superstructure is the seemingly trabeated system of columns and beams discussed above (the lightest region in Figure 3.7). The two systems are close to alignment but slightly shifted. The space they frame is occupied by scenes from the Christ Passion. Religious depictions, gray in Figure 3.7, use the structure as supports but also explicitly ignore it. Sculpted statues stand on

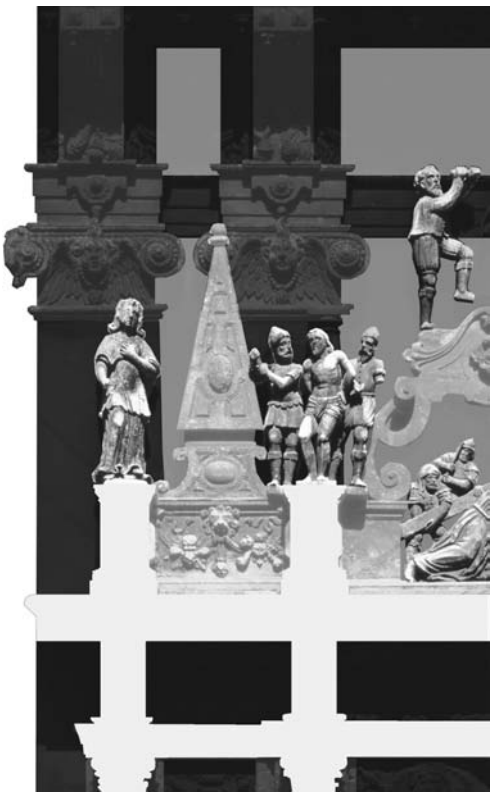


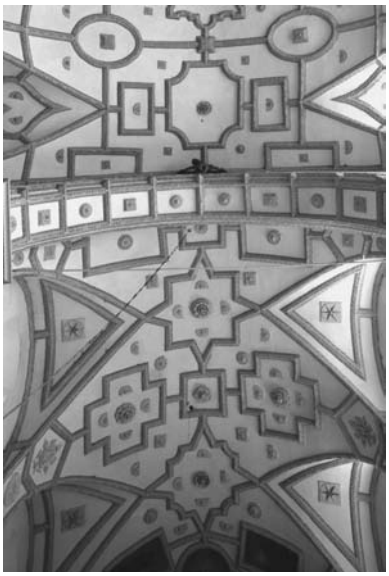
Figure 3.7

solid bases but also climb up the whimsical forms and end up in front of the monumental architrave, a relationship forbidden by the old rules of classical orders. The spatial and visual logic of these carved scenes and fantastic forms seems to challenge and transgress architectural principles. Altogether, it appears that references to the proper Italian conventions were made only to question them. This unusual composition of figurative depictions does not diminish the significance of the representations of the Passion. To the contrary, the depictions of Christ's suffering and death seem significant in their own right, freed from the constraints of architectural logic. This composition is deeply religious but also of the Reformation era; it uses an architectural space of representation to explore how to distinguish the symbolic meaning of a religious event described in the scripture from layers of other structures of thought imposed on it by the Catholic Church. Gravity and the rational logic of structural systems are engaged representationally to test the degree to which their manifestations become arbitrary when used to frame religious content.

The Boim Chapel was probably designed by Andrzej Bemer, who moved to Lviv from Wrocław (Breslau).[36] Many buildings in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were designed by immigrants or a new generation of local builders, who absorbed the region's progressive and diverse ways of thinking. Some architects and masons came from Germany and the Netherlands, but the biggest influx was from rebellious northern Italy and the Italian-speaking region that today belongs to southern Switzerland, territories with strong ties to Calvinist communities. Italians primarily came from the region of Lakes Como and Lugano, and thus in Polish they were called *Komaskowie* or *Lugańczycy*. Their movement started in 1520, but the largest influx took place in 1560 and especially after 1580.[37] They settled in old centers of power as well as places rich in religious ferment and intellectual life. For example, of the thirty masons admitted to the builders' guild in Lublin between 1605 and 1626, seventeen were Italian, and they were so active that, as is recorded, some meetings of the guild were conducted in Italian.[38] The immigration of Komaskowie and Lugańczycy (also called *Tessyńczycy*) is an important cultural and artistic phenomenon. Its connections to the Reformation in northern Italy are crucial but remain obscure.[39] As far as architectural ideas are concerned, migrating designers brought with them not only memorized knowledge but also pattern books, a way of disseminating visual concepts that emerged at that time. It seems likely that the Boim Chapel was based on or inspired by patterns similar to those included in *Architectura*, a collection of mannerist images published in 1598 by German Wendel Dietterlin, most likely a Protestant.[40] Perhaps the most popular, however, were design books from Venice, the publishing powerhouse of rebellious northern Italy. For example, the same design patterns published by Sebastiano Serlio may be found in Venice,

Mantua, and on the vaulted ceiling of a collegiate church in Pułtusk, Poland, designed in 1560 by Jan Baptysta, an architect who emigrated from the Lugano area via Venice.[41] For that reason, mannerism in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has been frequently analyzed as an imported and imperfectly replicated foreign style. Such an approach definitely helps to affirm the assumption about the provincial character of these design efforts and to position them on the margins of the already well-established taxonomies of the traditional history of European art. In some cases, however, it is hard to ignore that local design ideas were consistent while noticeably different from foreign patterns. Seemingly unsophisticated, they still warranted recognition of their unique artistic identity. The so-called style of Lublin Renaissance (*renesans lubelski*) or Kalisz-Lublin Renaissance (*renesans kalisko lubelski*) provides an emblematic example.[42] Territories where Calvinist communities settled, the Lublin region in particular, were among the most intellectually and artistically vibrant centers of the Reformation.[43] Still, both Kalisz—a town near Arians' Raków—and Lublin never became centers of power and are little known to the world today. The fact that people living in such provincial territories generated a way of thinking about architecture that had a profound impact on Poland, Lithuania, and Belarus in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has puzzled historians.[44] Discussions about the Lublin Renaissance almost always revolve around particular kinds of decorations, be it of patterns added to vaulted ceilings, geometric forms imposed on gables of churches and elevations of urban buildings, or complex skylines shaped by large parapets. The buildings, specifically their construction, functional layout, or articulation of volumes, seem secondary in these studies. The reasons why decoration had become the primary attribute of that style have been only implied. If one agrees with the general belief that Lublin Renaissance was a regional style, a provincial modification of imported principles manifesting a high culture, the superficiality of these symbolic practices is built into such an assumption. It is easy to think about an added decoration as intellectually or stylistically inferior to a system that integrates all building attributes and elements. In contrast, I believe that it was exactly the focus on architectural articulation that helped critically engage old systems. Similar to the Boim Chapel, the layer of decorations provided a degree of freedom necessary to problematize and explore those well-established principles.

Consider the decorations of vaulted ceilings. They emerged in many places in Europe. Some examples similar to Lublin Renaissance might be found in rebellious northern Italy and the Italian-speaking territories of Switzerland. An even closer resemblance exists in the art of Protestant Northern Europe.[45] The techniques of making these ornaments are essential for their symbolic function. They were prefabricated, frequently cast of gypsum in wooden



Figures 3.8a, 3.8b, and 3.8c

forms, and then attached to the building's structure. As with the columns added to the bearing wall in the Boim Chapel in Lviv, the new technique liberated architectural articulation from the constraints of the structural logic.

Figures 3.8a, 3.8b, and 3.8c show three examples of vaulted ceilings classified as emblematic of the Lublin-Renaissance style. At the top, Figure 3.8a is a photograph from the church of the Bernardine order in Lublin. This older Gothic building, after being partially destroyed by fire, was remodeled in 1602–08 by Rudolf Negroni and Jakub Balin of Komask immigration. It is one of the earliest instances of Lublin Renaissance ornaments. Though different structurally, the sculpted lines generally follow the logic of the stone ribs, which would have collected and transferred the load in Gothic. Only in the center of the larger structural sections, in the most horizontal fragment of the vault, does the pattern become explicitly decorative. Star-like forms occupy the place where Gothic ribs would meet at a larger keystone. What used to be an articulated gathering of forces into a solid structural element, primarily to cancel one another out, was transformed here into an ornamental void.[46] This experimentation with and gradual disintegration of orders driven by a singular logic of physical performance continued in the region. Figure 3.8b shows a fragment of the vaulted ceiling in a synagogue

constructed between 1610–20 in Zamość.[47] The ornamental lines decorating the synagogue seem drawn, not constructed. They articulate much more than the intersections of vaults (places where Gothic ribs would be located). The shape created in the center seems totally arbitrary. While the lines of decorations in the Bernardine church coincided with the way light reveals the geometry of vaults, here the large form in the center floats as if the spatial geometry of the building could not restrain it. Another example from that time, Figure 3.8c, shows the parish church in Kazimierz Dolny nad Wisłą. The ceiling was designed by the same Komask, Jakub Balin, who worked in Lublin, and it was executed in 1610–13. Like other significant examples of that time, these decorations create a dense pattern of repetitive shapes arranged according to an order that is not subordinate to but rather in a dialogue with the structural logic of the church.[48] Star-like, cross-like, rectangular, triangular, or oval shapes are placed according to a grid imposed on the cylindrical surfaces of the ceiling. There is something more explicit, more strongly pronounced than in the vault Balin designed in Lublin, about silencing the structural logic and foregrounding a new order. New patterns are elemental and multiple, as if the purpose of this arrangement was to collect variety without establishing hierarchy within it. Imagine these repetitive shapes as they most likely were, painted with vibrant colors. Such a colorful mosaic of elements that are united to a certain degree and yet preserve their individual character—a tapestry of difference made visible in its whole complexity—resembles the cultural, religious, and social makeup of the commonwealth at that time. Yet, this was the visual environment designed for Catholic worship.

In general, Kazimierz Dolny provides a good example of the cultural and architectural phenomena of the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. It was different from its current image—a small picturesque town, a frozen-in-time tourist attraction. It was a prosperous river port, a center of commerce connecting Gdańsk and the Hanseatic League with the grain-producing territories of eastern Poland. Its most important history is connected with the Firlej (Firley) family, one of the most powerful families in the commonwealth. In 1510, Kazimierz Dolny became an administrative center of the so-called *starostwo* and was granted by the king to the Firlejs of Dąbrowica.[49] The history of that family is like a microcosm of the shifts between Catholics and Protestants in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Poland. The Firlejs followed different confessions and played top leadership roles on both sides of the political divisions created by the Reformation.[50] The ties between the Firlejs living in the castle of Kazimierz Dolny and the other members of this extended family living in Janowiec, a town-base established by them directly across the Wisła river, must have been close.[51] The town of Kazimierz Dolny had a diverse community with

Figure 3.9

contacts reaching far beyond the boundaries of the commonwealth. Wealthy Polish families such as the Przybyłowie and Górscy, for example, shared power with the Celejowie (Celli), a family of Italian origin. A well-established Jewish community coexisted with merchants of diverse European ancestry. Wacław Husarski shows that people with foreign-sounding names came from Hanseatic Gdańsk and Toruń (Thorn), but the town also hosted many coming directly from the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Italy. Like their cosmopolitan landlords, these burghers were used to different cultural and religious perspectives.[52] In 1561 and 1585, when trade was booming, two big fires destroyed the material fabric of the town, and the need for new constructions made all of Kazimierz Dolny, not only the parish church, into a testing ground of architectural ideas.

Out of the many wealthy buildings that, according to old paintings, used to surround the market square of Kazimierz Dolny, only two remain intact. Shown here in Figure 3.9, the so-called Kamienice Przybyłów were built in 1615 for two brothers, Mikołaj and Krzysztof Przybyła.[53] Figurative representations of their respective patron saints mark their centers. St. Nicolas is depicted in a rectangular frame in the façade on the left, and St. Christopher is the central figure on the right. A follower of any Protestant confession would not mark a

house with an image of his/her patron saint. Religious reformers unequivocally objected to the Catholic concept of sainthood as economically-driven and imposed on the teachings of the Bible. In addition to these larger representations of the two saints, the elevations include multiple sculpted depictions of other saints, apostles, and different symbols.[54] Undoubtedly, the two brothers considered themselves good Catholics, but their attitude toward religion was not dogmatic.[55] There is something almost Protestant or at least unorthodox in the fact that they gave themselves the right to reinterpret Catholic symbols and to turn them into decoration for a private home.

Figures 3.10a and 3.10b

Figure 3.10a shows the fragment where the two buildings meet. Two sculpted figures are depicted side by side. One of them is Christ and the other is a hybrid depiction of something between the devil—the way he appears in popular art—and the mythological satyr. The whole elevation is composed of a mixture of mythological and strictly Christian subjects. Unlike in more conventional figurative representations, the sitting Christ appears smaller and somehow less imposing than the devil.[56] The scene does not conform to the conventions of representing the last temptation either. Both figures appear to be dressed in costumes, preparing for a casual spectacle. They appear caught off guard, unaware that somebody was looking at them. It seems that they just stopped talking and became absorbed by something happening on the right. This is not a blasphemous representation, though. This is what happens to religious representation if one removes institutional codes of meanings, for example, a discriminating distinction between religious and pagan stories, principles that equate a conventional pose with particular messages, or

compositional codes, such as those that associate centrality or size with importance. When Protestants placed the Catholic ways of expressing religious significance in doubt, other attributes (like the human dimensions of Christ and the devil) became more thinkable. The architectural framing of these two figures adds to this shifting of assumptions. Their position, especially that of Christ, is strangely constructed. Marked as two small black shapes in Figure 3.10b, they are an exception to the rhythm of parapet decorations. The rectangle where Christ is depicted should not even have existed within this compositional logic. It overlaps with the line that divides the two buildings and should have been split approximately into two equal parts.[57] It is as if the two buildings shared this exceptional spot. Thus, the depiction of Jesus Christ is central not according to simple rules of geometry, but rather because it does not conform to these rules. This freedom to redefine architectural and religious orders may be seen as the most unique feature of the whole composition. Figure 3.10b diagrammatically shows that the Kamienice Przybyłów explore rules that connect and secure the freedom of individual elements. Each of them is tested in a variety of ways. The most unifying is the horizontal band that aligns the two buildings at the level of the lower section of the parapet. It consists of a repetitive rhythm of religious figures framed by mannerist pilasters. The decorations above them and those in the vertical boxes below resemble certain design ideas from the Netherlands.[58] These geometric patterns seem to blend the logic of architecture and furniture-making. They are added to the building as if they were made of a different material. The entire roof parapet composition ties the two buildings together without being uniform or formulaic.[59] Rich shapes creating the skyline are different in each building and, because of the corner composition, not repetitive. Figure 3.10b shows also that the middle part of each elevation, the livable *piano nobile,* offers an almost unrestricted gathering of individual entities. That surface indiscriminately accommodates the two patron saints, many sculpted figures of sacral and profane origin, plus various forms of architectural articulation. Windows, for example, exist both as independent elements and in pairs that form a larger piece. The pilasters, darkened in Figure 3.10b, appear independent of the other pieces. Each of them is composed like the whole elevation—their carved bodies are united by the underlying concept of a column with a capital at the top, but they are broken into multiple entities of figurative or ornamental decorations in the middle. This conceptually inclusive attitude extends into the urban character of Kamienice Przybyłów. While the elevation represents interactions among different visual elements, the building physically accommodates different people and their actions. At the bottom, both buildings open to the city and invite the diversity of urban life under their arcades.

In the eyes of many historians, the whole composition is perhaps charming but definitely provincially imperfect. Apparently, it is an unsophisticated space of representation because it admits conflicted and unrefined ideas. For example, at the end of one of his studies, Karol Majewski concludes that the façade could serve as an example of ways in which artists producing Lublin Renaissance in Kazimierz Dolny lost respect for the principles of Renaissance proper—they deformed classical details, violated rules of proportions, lost a sense of the human scale, exaggerated the intensity of decorations, and thus achieved a willful and symbolically disturbing effect.[60]

The Przybyła brothers were not ideologically subversive pseudo-Catholics. Nor do I think that Kamienice Przybyłów, or Boim Chapel, for that matter, were provincial, meaning ignorant of the world changing around them. They actively took part in those changes. Actually, the distinction between many Catholics and Protestants was not very sharp in the commonwealth at that time. Even those operating symbolically within the Catholic frame of reference applied a healthy dose of skepticism, which made them, like Protestants, suspicious of old Roman institutional principles and practices. I believe that, if asked, the Przybyła brothers would have had little or no idea that their buildings combined both Catholic and Protestant ways of thinking. For the progressive part of society, coexistence of different worldviews and skepticism was simply a way of life. If this building is a sign of the way Polish Catholics thought, no wonder the commonwealths became asylum hereticorum.

Architecture must have been instrumental in establishing new ways of thinking about the changing reality of the commonwealth. The whole society, with its influx of religious dissenters, was in a nascent phase—its new structures of relationships not yet fixed. At the time when politicians in many other European countries discovered that the polarization of religious differences produces power, Poland and Lithuania were still absorbing people of different beliefs, without discrimination. Architects, like all thinking people of that time, had to face the challenge of establishing new orders of coexistence. Thus they designed town halls, temples, and urban houses to explore this new reality. Two issues seemed central in these explorations: how to identify and dismantle old hierarchical or discriminating structures of thought—in Poland mostly rooted in the politics of the Roman Catholic tradition—and how to think of orders that preserve individual differences while constructing the sense of collective wholeness. The spaces of representation they created revealed various ways of thinking about these issues and served as a nonverbal medium for negotiations. Most likely, not even fully realizing why, people of all religious convictions and cultural backgrounds must have felt at home in places like Kazimierz Dolny. Everything that made

such architecture an integral part of dynamically changing symbolic environments makes these phenomena difficult to study today. Shifts in meanings and seeming inconsistencies of programs make the representational constitution of these buildings inaccessible to those who want to view them as contributing to stable structures of domination. Designers working in the eastern territories were among the most progressive in Europe; their production was dynamic and open. In that complex reality, the absence of centralized power was the sine qua non of new ways of thinking but also the reason why these efforts remained localized. This decentralized character of new symbolic practices both energized creativity and made those people and their production vulnerable when they were confronted with the new kind of political forces put forth to eradicate diversity.

Strategies of Re-forming Thought in Europe

The architectural phenomena of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are related to more general processes that took place in Europe. To understand these complexities of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in the eastern countries it is necessary to view in a new way the seemingly better-known examples in the West. While a similar ideology powered the Reformation movement on the whole continent, the primary difference between the commonwealth and western countries was the speed with which new religious ideas were polarized and absorbed by power in the West. Before Poland and Lithuania were flooded with Protestants, architects engaged with rebellious symbolic thoughts in France. In 1519, Francis I started rebuilding the castle of Chambord at the site of a hunting lodge of the Counts of Blois. John Calvin was only ten, but Lutheran ideas started to find their way into European courts, including France. People were developing an appetite for questioning the status quo and the manipulation of classical principles, a taste for the "sophisticated indulgence in the bizarre." Francis I favored Italian artists and architects and invited many of them to France. Work on the castle of Chambord was completed in 1547 (50?), parallel to the rise of Calvinism in France and the growing antagonism between Catholics and Huguenots.[61] The building has been praised for its imaginative design, but other than spatially intricate stairways the roof-scape is its most unusual part.

Figure 3.11a shows the castle of Chambord as seen from a distance. The body of the building seems regular and repetitive in comparison to the complexity of the roof. The layout of the main building's interior is designed on a cross plan, with four halls/corridors intersecting in the monumental stairway, and this arrangement is repeated vertically. Unlike the systematic main keep of the castle, the roof-scape is exuberant in its multiplicity

of elements and their relationships. It consists of much more than chimneys and surfaces designed to shed rainwater; rather, it includes spaces for people to be in. Figure 3.11b shows a glimpse of such an experience. A person is intimately surrounded by elements that usually are designed to be viewed from a distance. The geometric clarity of the castle below may be forgotten. Elevated like an island floating above the landscape, this roof-scape creates its own spatial reality. In contrast to the experience of the main building, the roof is like a surreal dream. Multiple building-like architectural objects, be they volumes of enclosed space with windows and doors, huge chimneys, and pyramids of roofs, surround a person. They cluster together to form street-like meandering passages. Frequently these walkways are tight and limit views, thus heightening the unpredictability of experiences. Most unique, however, is the very articulation of those spatial objects. When one keeps in mind the consistency of the spaces below, the roof seems strangely incorrect. As Figure 3.11b shows, a huge window dominates a small façade and seemingly rests on another window, which almost reaches to the floor. Not only do dormers pretend to look like entire buildings, but also many chimneys are overscaled and overarticulated and, seen up close, are as imposing as towers. These pieces of the roof seem independent even when forcefully clustered together. Decorations add to the confusion. They are large in comparison to the miniaturized elevations. This material environment looks as if a collection of huge architectural toys was used for a bizarre exercise in architectural composition. Considering that this unusual environment sits on top of the royal retreat, the place implies

Figures 3.11a and 3.11b

a possibility to be external to the reality proper. The roof seems to be a space designed to test, when one chooses to do so, how it would be if the rules governing conventional architecture were in flux. This experience is not conclusive but it can be shared. This is an intellectual laboratory designed for the political elite, people fascinated the by subversive character of new ideas at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but containing them in a roof-island of the royal retreat.

France, at that time, was the center of emerging Calvinism. Huguenots, mostly the followers of John Calvin, became the target of persecution, leading to the exile of Calvin in 1534.[62] According to Catharine Randall, during those years of persecution and even at the time of the Wars of Religion, people with Calvinist sentiments dominated the architectural profession. The most prominent among the first generation of such designers was Philibert de l'Orme. As Randall says, "Philibert has never been identified as a Calvinist, and while some aspects of his life suggest that he remained nominally Catholic until the end of his days, other characteristics of his career and writings indicate a strongly evangelical stance and perhaps Calvinist sympathies."[63] She also points out that "Philibert was . . . an evangelical during the tense political and religious period just prior to, and during the early years of, the Wars of Religion," which meant that he subscribed to a point of view "signified by a desire to reform the Catholic church from within."[64] Probably, similar to the much later example of Kamienice Przybyłów and the tolerant environment of Kazimierz Dolny, during the first few decades of the sixteenth century in France, the distinction between an open-minded Catholic and a Protestant was not very sharp. "Evangelicals were much influenced by the work and writings of Martin Luther, as was Calvin."[65] Later, however, when religious distinctions were sharpened for political reasons, masses of people died in Paris for their convictions. Ideological polarization and the need to disguise one's beliefs became a matter of survival. Architects had to develop complex ways of subtly suggesting their ideological convictions.

Figure 3.12 shows Philibert's illustration of a chapel he designed at Chateau d'Anet.[66] Characteristic of his strategies, Philibert shows the backside, or less official part of the building. This composition shares many characteristics with the roof-scape of Chambord. The chapel seems to consist of simple components assembled in an additive manner. Each of them refers to a common but distorted feature of a building. Like in Chambord, windows are large while elevations are miniaturized. Each building-like piece creates something of an iconic tower in appearance. Roofs, like openings, are overarticulated. While the royal retreat seems to be motivated by curiosity, the fragmentation of conventions and shifting of assumptions in Philibert's design appear much more systematic and less joyful. Actually, in light of Randall's findings, Philibert emerges as a complex personality entangled by the conflicted combination of his state career and aspirations to be an independent thinker. He

had to deal with "his feeling of oppression" when he designed buildings for his Catholic patrons while in disagreements with them.[67] Like other architects operating in the reality of religious persecution, he resorted to subversive strategies—he smuggled his ideas, grafted them, and made them both a part of and an alien addition to existing orders. He was fascinated by concepts of subtexts that he could sneak into the main text of the dominant or expected structures of symbolism. In some cases he wanted his manipulations of meanings to remain completely hidden. For example, he explored many structural ideas of arches made of wood, a material much less suited for compression than stone. He intended such solutions to be disguised by final finishes so only the designer and those privy to the secret would understand it. Even knowing that such a concept might enfeeble a building, he still considered it a valid option for testing "the dichotomy and tension between inside and outside, surface and inner support, Catholic expectations and Calvinist codes."[68] In his own house, he hid the main entry while the symmetrical façade implied a conventional approach.[69] Altogether, his projects show that Philibert de l'Orme viewed the world as a hostile place full of potential persecutors, and he defended the Calvinist space by designing buildings as both material architecture and a text legible to some and illegible to others. He succeeded and created buildings that "historians describe . . . with terms like 'concealment,' 'subterfuge,' and 'camouflage.'"[70] In the France that Philibert lived in, independent thinkers and especially sympathizers of religious reform had to gradually abandon the curious experimentation displayed by the initial project for the roof-scape in Chambord; instead, they had to pursue entrenched design strategies. Architecture must have become a well-controlled tool of political struggles.

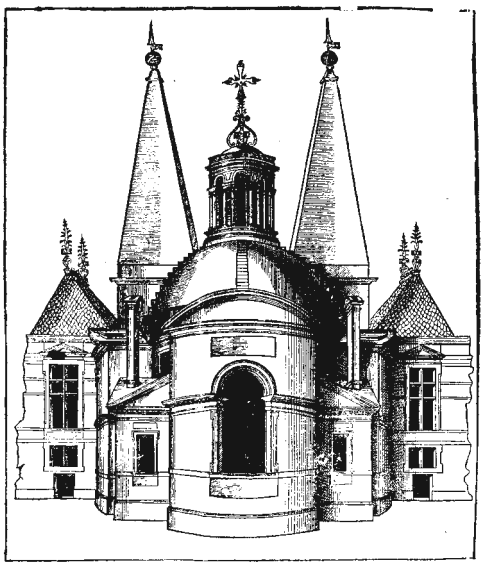


Figure 3.12

Randall's discussion provides a rare glimpse into the complexity of relationships between crypto-Calvinism and design ideas. If one studies both architecture and ways of knowing it, one aspect of her work is uniquely telling. As an architect, Philibert worked with material and experiential phenomena that, as in many other cases discussed in this book, could not be coded or fully contained in verbal interpretations. His design and writings, though, appear suspiciously susceptible to contemporary literary analysis. Such alignment

seems to reflect more than his obsessive interest in the symbolic potency of linguistic structures. It is as if Philibert anticipated the logocentric bias that dominated critical theories at the end the twentieth century. Such intellectual alignment is a sign that the work of crypto-Calvinist designers belonged to an epistemological threshold in the West. At the time when people fought wars over interpretations of scripture, all symbolic practices grew dependent on text, and this bias has been deeply built into Western epistemology ever since.

An emphasis on the verbal constitution of signs underlay Calvinist theology. Calvin redefined the correspondence of the faith and the Word, restoring the text of the Bible as the foundation on which a "true temple" should be constructed in the "inner, or moral space" of a Christian soul.[71] The objective of such construction was to sever the traditional (Catholic) bond between the physical and metaphysical—the connection exemplified by the concept of transubstantiation—and make the metaphysical accessible without institutional structures of the Roman Catholic Church. As Randall notes, "to describe the relationship between the visible and the invisible church, the Reformers forged a new language, one in which words pointed beyond themselves to a higher reality rather than purporting to describe immanence."[72] The new language was a technological device of symbolic actions. It was saturated with architectural terms referring to ordering space and constructing meanings. The policies of ideological persecution only strengthened and sharpened this tool. When political repression focused on the material practices of the Reformation, language became a space that sheltered religious differences. Protestants must have discovered that they could still function as a community united by the way they thought and communicated. It should not be surprising that in the political reality where people on both sides of the religious barricades became obsessed with the control of the symbolic, the Calvinists' language followed that need. The need for coded meanings in architecture, implied by the very title of Randall's book, is a sign of the desire to transfer Calvin's model of theological construction to other symbolic practices of life. To protect the community under siege, the new language acquired the qualities of a weapon—it became easy to use, precise, and concealed when necessary. Symbolic thought subscribed to that new technology of meaning production. At the very center of such operations was the possibility of the total elimination of vagueness and an unlimited control over symbolic messages—thus a possibility of total literalness.

Philibert's ideas include many examples of extreme literalness. It is almost surprising that a person with a seemingly refined understanding of how people interact with visual representation would resort to illustrations like those in Figures 3.13a and 3.13b. They show fragments of two pictures in Philibert's *Architecture*. According to Anthony Blunt, they summarize his conception of "Good and Bad Architects . . . a sort of conclusion to his treatise." Blunt says:

> The Bad Architect [Figure 3.13a] wears the dress of a wise and learned man, which will deceive the ignorant, but he rushes along with unwise haste, catching in thorns, tripping over stones, and surrounded by skulls of dead bulls, which signify coarseness of intelligence. He is depicted without eyes, to show that he cannot perceive truth, without hands, so that he can execute nothing, and without ears with which to listen to the advice of others. He has not even a nose, with which he might at least sense what is good, but only a mouth with which he can babble and speak evil . . . The Good Architect [Figure 3.13b] is also depicted in the dress of a man of learning, but his deportment conforms to his character. He has three eyes, one to contemplate God and the past, one to study the present and to conduct his own work with wisdom, and the third to foresee the future and guard against the attacks and calumnies to which he will be subjected. De 1'Orme gives him four ears to indicate that he must listen much more than he must speak, and four hands with which to carry out his studies and execute his works.[73]

Figures 3.13a, 3.13b, and 3.13c

This rhetorical excess may amuse people today, but it is only an extreme case of a way of thinking that underlies the Calvinists' strategy of controlling thought. They equated visual representation and architecture with coded texts designed

and deciphered exclusively as verbal constructions. This is what makes many figures in Philibert's *Architecture* so open to linguistic models of analysis today. In each case, be it a column looking like an untreated tree trunk, a stag at the top of the main gate of the Chateau d'Anet, which instead of facing the approaching visitor looks into space behind the wall, or a statue like the one in Figure 3.13c, the meanings are defined and shifted in a purely verbal way. A visual or spatial construct is assumed to illustrate elemental communication; its symbolic structure is broken into conventional tropes of meaning and then, in the case of Calvinist strategies, one of them is altered. Thus Figure 3.13c, a design for a roof decoration, shows a statue so stereotypical in its pose that Randall calls it cocky.[74] Whereas the monument of a soldier normally lines up with its base, this one stands off-center. The concept of a perfect symbol is thus put in doubt. These strategies for controlling meanings were not necessary and did not exist at the time when the roof-scape of Chambord was designed. Unlike architecture during the time of religious persecution, the royal retreat seems experimental, engaging many aspects of ambiguity and never reaching the conclusive stability of meanings that Philibert employs. A polarized world required more strict control over symbolic tools.

The rise and suppression of new religious ideas in France was related to similar, but less known, processes in Italy. Salvatore Caponetto discusses how the Protestant Reformation was spreading in centers there and how it was finally eradicated. Initially, between 1519 and 1530, as in France, Protestant ideas were generally accessible in Italy because they were perceived exclusively as theological discourse of little consequence for the political domination of the Roman Catholic Church.[75] At that time, Venice became a revolutionary clearinghouse. Soon, many understood the political power of the Reformation. In 1542 the Roman Inquisition was established and the situation changed drastically, starting with the persecution of heretical publications and then gradually spreading a reign of terror to all towns and social groups. Only once does Caponetto single out a particular region, devoting an entire chapter to the so-called "scandal of Modena and Mantua." Apparently it was an unusual case of Protestant conspiracy. Research shows that in Mantua the sympathy for the Reformation spread among "artisans as well as professional men" and even "some of the duke's courtiers."[76]

In Mantua in 1524, Giulio Romano found a safe haven at Gonzaga's court when he was about to be persecuted by Roman authorities.[77] As Caponetto shows, members of the powerful Gonzaga family were involved in politics on both sides of the Reformation's religious struggles. Federigo Gonzaga, the duke of Mantua, spent his formative years in France at the court of Francis I, who commissioned Chambord.[78] At the politically crucial moment,

however, against his Francophile sentiments and obligations to Rome, Federigo made an alliance with the emperor Charles V to fight the pope and Francis I.[79] Thus, in Mantua, the young architect found himself in the court both connected with the greatest European powers and strong enough to take advantage of its own political independence. Romano became the court architect and helped to gradually revitalize the city. His architecture is generally regarded as typifying mannerism, but his work had strong conceptual ties to the symbolic strategies of the Reformation.

Figure 3.14a suggests such a connection. Romano designed a house for himself in Mantua and most likely finished it by 1544, two years after the Roman Inquisition had been established.[80] In his house, as if aware of French practices, he resorted to an extreme literalness of symbolic expression. The façade detail shown in Figure 3.14a (probably a depiction of Hermes, the mythological messenger) is constituted symbolically like the images of good and bad architects in Figures 3.13a and 3.13b. In this coded figure, the ears and tongue denote the act of listening and talking. Possibly, they are chained together to symbolize the suppressed freedom of speech and communication under the increasing Roman control. The relationships between Romano's work and the symbolic strategies of the Reformation, however, are much more complex than this late and rather extreme example may suggest. Romano is best known as the architect of Palazzo del Te, which he designed earlier in his career. Like Chambord, Palazzo del Te was a place of retreat and entertainment. While the roof-scape was metaphorically separated from the reality of Francis I France, the palace in Mantua was actually built on an island, the Isola del Te, for Federigo's mistress, Isabella Boschetti. It was a major expansion of a preexisting building. It has been acknowledged that the palace design commented on forces that shaped Federigo's reality, be it politics or the rivalry between the two women in the duke's life. For example, the apartment of his mistress in Palazzo del Te ironically resembles the layout of the apartment of his powerful mother Isabella d'Este in Palazzo Ducale.[81] As for European politics, Egon Verheyen draws attention to the fact that "it seems more than coincidence that the plans to transform the villa into a palace were made at the same time as the *Sacco di Roma*."[82] As if he wanted to disarm dominant manifestations of power, Romano reproduced and altered architectural ideas emblematic of the Roman influence. Thus, as Verheyen noted, "the entrance loggia in the palace's western wing [Figure 3.14b] was modeled after the entrance of the Palazzo Farnese; the Loggia di Davide in the eastern wing [shown from the outside in Figure 3.14c] reflects the loggia of the Villa Madama."[83] These formal quotations, like Philibert's literal manipulations of conventions, accept some but change other symbolic attributes. Romano was no Philibert, however. He operated in a more open environment, but also his

Figures 3.14a, 3.14b, and 3.14c

imagination and architectural palette were richer and more diverse. His explorations of the architectural space of representation engaged the whole spectrum of thought and the most ephemeral aspects of experiences. It is Romano's ability to control the degree to which something appears or becomes thinkable that shielded his early concepts from reductive literalness. Figure 3.14b shows an example of such a design operation. The most significant aspect of the western loggia is the tension between two kinds of thinking. The spatial order of the loggia is geometrically lucid and precisely articulated by the use of conventional elements like columns, cornices, and pilasters. The vault, a fragment of which is visible at the top of Figure 3.14b, pushes such an idea of geometric ordering to its extreme—a repetitive pattern, a pure abstract order, so self-referential that it does not need to relate to other elements of the interior. At the moment when one realizes how exclusive geometric orders could become, another understanding of that architecture becomes possible. Columns that support the vault have been left unfinished, revealing the chaotic character of the stones' raw surfaces. Yet this randomness is not unbounded; they have been shaped enough to make the conventional form of a column discernable. In contrast to the perfect pattern above, the columns counteract one's desire to impose rules of geometry on the material world.

This is no longer the formally correct reference to the Palazzo Farnese. Rather, this is a space of representation where one's attention focuses on the ways and degrees of shaping orders.

Figure 3.14c shows another example of such a design experiment. Like the structure supporting the Château de Chenonceau designed by Philibert, the Loggia di Davide, and the bridge leading to it in Palazzo del Te are reflected in the still surface of water. Arches in the base of Palazzo del Te and those supporting the bridge are semicircular; thus, when the water level is correct, material and reflected shapes work together to create perfect circles. This illusive perfection draws attention to the fact that the whole elevation is doubled in the water. In this way, the most conventional and traditional of architectural rules, the principle of symmetry, opens up its inner workings for deliberation. As Figure 3.14c shows, the symmetry of the material building is visible simultaneously with the illusion of symmetry created by the water. Does the principle of symmetry apply to vertical mirroring or is only the horizontal relationship relevant?[84] Is the Vitruvian balance achieved if one-half of the symmetrical composition is material and the other only perceptual? There is nothing obvious in the way Romano poses these questions and he offers no immediate answers. These compositions barely trigger a need for reflection, which if followed as a critical insight may problematize the taken-for-granted notion of an order.

These ways of destabilizing symbolic thought are omnipresent in the building. Palazzo del Te is known for its murals, for example. Images painted on the walls and ceilings create illusions of space or mythical past and use the whole spectrum of visual stimuli to play on fears and desires. Erotic depictions at the Palazzo del Te are among the most explicit and sensuous of that time. Plate 14 shows a mural in the Sala dei Giganti. Romano used all the means at his disposal to create an unsettling environment there. First, the painting shows structures tumbling down and crashing on people. The illusion of a dangerous space resonates with the figurative depictions of human gestures and grotesque facial expressions. The men appear horrified and all look in the same direction, at the angry gods in the clouds. Giants struggle to survive, their muscles in tension. The whole visual composition strengthens the impressions created by the figurative representation. No human body is shown in its entirety. Colors help to break the painting into multiple and irregular fragments. Intense as it is, this room would be just another exercise in visualizing an ancient myth if not for the way it also implies a broader reflection. The most unusual feature of this space of representation is the way Romano related the illusionary and physical space. Plate 14 shows at its bottom how a doorway opens a view into an enfilade of openings. Although the position of the opening seems almost accidental in relationship to the illusionary space of the painting, this sequence of spatial experiences is carefully structured. The fictional space of

the gods' anger and the spatial corridor designed for movement of people create a strong tension. While the painted environment is confusing and chaotic, the passage between the Loggia di Davide and Sala dei Giganti is perfectly structured. What makes this relationship truly unique is that Romano did not juxtapose simple binary opposites—for example, the simulated and the real, the painted illusion and material structure. He drew attention to the fact that the chaos had been produced in one's imagination and the order had been imposed on something much more elusive than solid elements. The enfilade of openings is actually an ordered absence of walls. The long view is possible because empty frames in the Sala del Imperatore, Sala degli Stucchi, and Loggia di Davide are perfectly aligned.[85] They imply human movement and gazes. I do not, and most likely Romano did not expect that each person crossing the door would register this experiential phenomenon as I have described and interpreted it. This space of representation operates on the level of nascent thoughts. One may only sense a vague notion of the relationship between the painted hall and the passage. The meaningful connection might appear in one's mind after leaving the place. This design is not communicating coded and conclusive messages. Rather, by juxtaposing two different but subtly related ways of thinking, this space adds another insight into the issue of ordering in general.

The question of how to think about new orders was shared by Protestants and those who sympathized with their struggle against the domination of the Roman Catholic Church. Strategies aimed at reorganizing symbolic thought included Calvin's construction of the concept of the true temple, but also literal symbolism and less explicit tests of experiential attributes in material architecture. Perhaps the most common thread shared by many rebellious architects was their focus on the function of an element or elemental attribute within a larger system of architectural conventions.

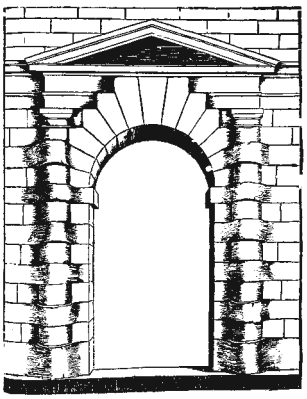
Romano contributed to these efforts too. Figures 3.15a and 3.15b, unaltered photographs, show how he used the courtyard façade in Palazzo del Te to explore the issue. Unlike the previously discussed aspects of del Te, this is a precise, almost syntactic, exploration. Visually, this wall consists of two primary systems of construction known to architects at the time: a trabeated frame consisting of stone columns and beams, highlighted in Figure 3.15c, and a masonry wall made of blocks, enhanced graphically in Figure 3.15d. Together they seem to frame a set of niches. Against the expectation created by Catholic practices, all these niches are empty. This design decision seems to be informed by Calvin's criticism of "Catholics [who] leave no niches free of idolatrous statues."[86] Romano's architecture never produces a one-liner of literal symbolism, however. Figure 3.15a shows a close-up of the upper part of the niche visible in the center of Figure 3.15b. Two stone elements at the

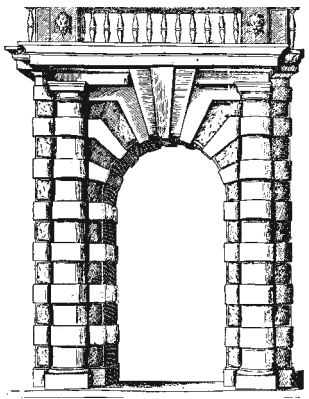
top of this small pediment are separated. The gap, though small, violates basic rules of construction. Paradoxically, it appears that the gap resulted from the keystone pushing upward, as if it defied laws of gravity. Since antiquity, gravity, as a natural force, has been treated as an axiom on which architects constructed various justifications for architectural orders. Romano thus suspends the unquestionable and explores the consequences of the unlikely. The trabeated frame, highlighted in Figure 3.15c, appears to be structurally correct only in general. The architrave and frieze—horizontal elements supported by the columns—are strangely broken into pieces in an antitectonic manner. They seem to be designed as an unbalanced set of horizontal arches. Their keystones protrude below, as if dropping down. This would indicate that structural forces are not in equilibrium. As soon as such an unstable condition becomes thinkable, other attributes of this composition become more perceivable. Figure 3.15d shows that the wall filling up space between the columns appears strangely incomplete. The figure highlights only stone blocks and thus reveals how many of them are missing. A wall like this one would not stand up. Columns seemingly embedded in it would not provide sufficient support for stones placed next to them and these blocks are not laid consistently enough to hold together by themselves. All these attributes of the

Figures 3.15a, 3.15b, 3.15c, and 3.15d

elevation create an impression that this is a representation of instability, a frozen moment right before a total collapse. Romano makes all these explorations accessible only to those who are willing to suspend disbelief and leave the safety of conventional assumptions. After all, one could easily dismiss Figure 3.15b as nothing more than a mannerist exercise of "sophisticated indulgence in the bizarre." The wall has been standing safely for almost five hundred years. Like the elevation of the Boim Chapel in Lviv, this architectural exploration draws attention to the fact that the perceptual order has been arbitrarily imposed on the solid masonry behind it. Romano engages only the articulation and not the actual construction of the wall itself. With the Reformation attitude, he is not questioning the unchangeable principles, like those of God's creation, but rather he critically engages the orders created by humans. In the process he reveals how tenuous the distinction between the two may appear, and how easy it is to be deceived.

The exploration of architectural elements and the rules of their assembly lent itself well to publishing. Printed images could reach much larger audiences than those who could visit a particular building. Also, graphic representation better highlighted the speculative character of new ideas. Figures 3.16a and 3.16b show two such examples, images published by two evangelicals and architectural theoreticians. The first image is from *The Fourth Book* by Sebastiano Serlio and the second from *Architecture* by Philibert.[87] Although they present projects for portals, the most important design issue they explore is the relationship between a column and a masonry wall. As if traditional definitions clearly distinguishing between the two were no longer sufficient, these drawings test a hybrid condition. In both cases, the columns are made of stone units articulated in such a way that the column shaft acquires some characteristics of the masonry wall behind it. In the case of Serlio's drawing, Figure 3.16a, the shape of the individual units either separates or makes the column blend with the wall. Stones of the first kind appear to be conventionally cylindrical and are placed in front of the masonry surface. The second kind creates wavy protrusions and implies that the column is nothing more than a local modification of the wall coursing. The portal designed by Philibert, Figure 3.16b, explores the same issue but with emphasis on the visual perception of orders. He also alternates the characteristics of stones while his test includes the structure behind the column. As Serlio tests the column, Philibert alters the whole wall surface to explore a similar conceptual issue. Every second course of the masonry has a so-called rustic, or coarse, finish that contrasts with the bands of smooth finishes. The sizes of column units follow the wall pattern. Cylindrical blocks that line up with smooth coursing are greater in diameter. Strangely, this visual connection between finishes and sizes appears





Figures 3.16a and 3.16b

more perceivable than the distinction between the wall and the column. In one's mind, lines of smooth blocks and large cylinders unify the composition of the whole portal and thus counteract the expectation that one should correctly discern conventional elements such as a column, wall, capital, and pediment.

Serlio's and Philibert's explorations of traditional orders seem timid, however, when compared to the images of Wendel Dietterlin, an architectural visionary painter of the next generation. Son of a pastor, he operated in predominantly Protestant regions. Like all others who produced architectural pattern books, in his *Architectura* he seemingly deals with classical orders; at least that is what the chapter headings suggest. Actually, in his mind, the rules defining classical orders had already lost their restrictive power, just as, by 1593 (when his book was first published) the Roman ecclesia had lost control over religious matters in Protestant territories.

Figure 3.17 (in *Architectura*, Plate 105) may serve as a sample of the genre of fantastic explorations of architectural orders. This one, despite the fact that it belongs to his chapter on the Ionic order, makes almost no direct references to that order. It shows an unusually constructed and decorated window. Similar to the Boim Chapel, this design consists of two layers, the more regimented in the back and the more flamboyant in front. The two refer to structure and decoration, a relationship that was one of the key issues in the Italian Renaissance. Dietterlin does not attempt to provide new answers to those traditional questions but instead radically dismantles any expectations about presumed definitions and distinctions. Structural elements become antitectonic while figurative sculptures seem to transfer loads. All pieces blend visually and interact as if preempting even the possibility of

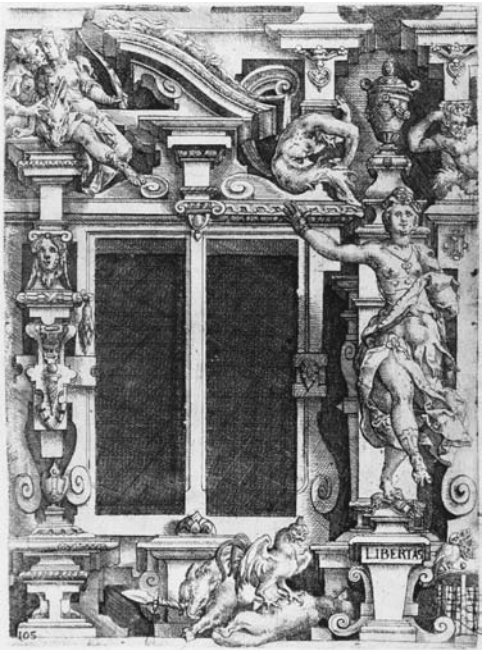


Figure 3.17

conventional distinctions. Black rectangles of window openings, for example, are set next to or framed by objects saturated with sensuality and eroticism; thus, geometry and mathematics—the rational bases of classical rules—are engaged by the untamed forces of human desire. Right in the middle of the picture, the most whimsical structural object, the window mullion, seems to support the heaviest-looking piece at its top. Additionally, the heavy object seems to counteract a rule of symmetry that the window implies. Altogether, this picture, like all images in *Architectura*, deliberately explores subversive strategies of thought. With the zeal of a Protestant artist, Dietterlin takes on all aspects of the ordering rules characteristic of Roman domination. He uses his extraordinary sensitivity to play with old justifications and paints a fascinating vision of the unbounded power of imagination.

Figure 3.17, an example of representational experimentation from a region under Protestant control, belongs to the same kind of practices uncovered in the asylum hereticorum of the commonwealth, crypto-Calvinist France, or in the rebellious region of Modena and Mantua. The Reformation engendered a profound shift in modalities of thought and infused representation with a critical attitude. Mannerism was not a matter of capricious expression of creativity but rather it revealed that artists supporting Protestant ideas, or at least sympathizing with them, developed complex ways of questioning Roman domination. Their work represented the whole spectrum of rebellious practices aimed at decomposing and disarming dominant ways of ordering the world. Although their critical emphasis varied and they revealed their attitudes to different degrees, all projects discussed here undermined traditional rules of establishing meanings and symbolic relationships. Those who see mannerism as a "sophisticated indulgence in the bizarre" merely convey their inability to position these practices within a system of cohesive stylistic categories. The very constitution of those artistic efforts was antithetical to refinement of a totalizing order or style.

Figure 3.18

The new understanding of practices generally labeled as mannerist also creates the possibility for a different way of thinking about the so-called baroque style. Many aspects of architecture and art at the time of the Reformation are classified as proto-baroque. Such connections are frequently based on formal similarities. Thus engravings of Dietterlin, like that shown in Figure 3.17, appear complex enough—the shapes they depict are twisted sufficiently—to indicate that they anticipated high baroque. The styles of mannerism and baroque, or rather the practices these two labels try to encapsulate, were directly related, but their relationships operated on much deeper levels than the superficial similarities of forms or compositions could reveal.

Consider the way the canon of the baroque church was established. In almost any historical survey of European architecture—if it is based on the traditional notion of periodization—the beginning of baroque is announced by the Il Gesù church in Rome. Its façade, shown here in Figure 3.18, was designed by Giacomo della Porta and built in 1575–84. The building behind this elevation was designed by Giacomo da Vignola in 1568 as a prototype church for the Society of Jesus, which was established much earlier, in 1534—at the time when Calvin had been forced out of France—by Ignatius of Loyola and six other colleagues studying in Paris.[88] By 1568, the order became the most powerful tool of the Counter-Reformation. Their prototype project codified the spatial layout and architectural characteristics of a new kind of church. One particular aspect of this design deserves closer inspection. For a building that announces the beginning of baroque, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "irregularly shaped . . . whimsical, grotesque, odd," Figure 3.18 shows a surprisingly disciplined composition. Indeed, baroque art and architecture, especially interiors, became emblematic of intense visual experiences and a complex play of forms. The front and the general layout of the church are closest to the initial design. As was the case with many early structures of the order, the execution of the Il Gesù interior was delayed by the lack of funds and the priority given to the construction of other new buildings. This almost rigid and austere façade records, I believe, how the Jesuits thought about the

representational function of architecture before they embraced "irregularly shaped" and "whimsical" compositions.

When the church was designed, under pressure from mannerist ideas and practices, the front of Il Gesù was to serve as a bold statement of defiance. As if to counterbalance those other subversive explorations of architectural orders, which frequently appeared in elevations, this flat composition is an exercise in establishing a monumental hierarchy of entablatures and pilasters. Its design is explicitly consistent; no exceptions to well-established rules and no vagueness in articulation are allowed. In the mannerists' world of evocative contradictions and skepticism, this was a reassertion of stable principles and unquestionable authority. The elevation represents discipline. It is not only a matter of geometrical precision with which the wall is divided but also the way such abstract rules have been materialized. The façade resembles the abstractness of a design drawing. In comparison to its vertical or horizontal dimensions, the depth of its spatial articulation is miniscule. Although monumental in character, it preserves the quality of a sketch drafted on a huge sheet of paper, with lines of approximately the same thickness drawn across the whole surface. Looking like a diagram of itself, this composition represents the very act of ordering. It shows how the Jesuits initially identified the Reformation problem and proposed a symbolic solution. This formulaic façade makes every effort to eradicate skepticism or the possibility of other interpretations. But the world was already transformed far beyond such simple definitions and black-and-white distinctions. Architects like Romano and Philibert trained people to think much more complex thoughts. They revealed in a variety of ways that conventional orders have nothing to do with religious beliefs and instead help to instill political power into religion. They also proved that it is possible to question and symbolically dismantle such superficial constructs. Defenders of the pope's authority needed much more sophisticated tools to win back the minds and hearts of people.

Catholic artists undoubtedly dealt with these problems, but the relationship that existed between mannerism and the Reformation and especially between baroque and the Counter-Reformation belong to the most contested issues of contemporary historiography. Traditional interpretations view baroque architecture as an embodiment of the so-called Jesuit style, invented specifically to fight the religious rebellion. As Gauvin Bailey shows, new scholarship has been debunking this assumption to reveal that Jesuit churches did not subscribe to one set of rules and, more generally, that the symbolic practices of the Society of Jesus had a multifaceted character.[89] The debate over whether or not baroque was the Jesuit style is hindered by the very concept of a style that hides the complexity of representational

practices and interactions between forces of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The concept of a style assumes an individual person or a group representing a historical period could be identified by the self-conscious consistency of distinctive features in their artistic production. Such a concept hardly applies to the time of the most artistically dynamic and experimental phenomena in European history. While mannerism in architecture was related to the Reformation, and baroque to the Counter-Reformation, they represented, first of all, strategies of thought-shaping. As such, mannerism and baroque were both similar and different, in conflict and successive alignment.

Among those who studied baroque ideas, Gilles Deleuze provides an insightful view of Leibniz and his concept of the fold. Without making references to architecture, the discussion reveals that the operation of the baroque fold is not that different from the design operations of the mannerism architects discussed. Consider the theory of two primary kinds of forces. According to Deleuze, "Leibnizian physics includes two principal chapters, one involving active or so-called derivative forces related to matter, and the other involving passive forces, or the resistance of material texture. Perhaps [in Leibniz's speculations] only at the limit does the texture become most evident, before rupture or tearing, when stretching, no longer being opposed to the fold, now expresses it in its pure state."[90] If such a passive force is thought of as holding together not physical material but rather a conceptual order—that is, when design principles are viewed as forces that predetermine and stabilize the symbolism of architectural form—the design explorations of Romano, Serlio, Philibert, or Dietterlin become nothing else but stretching or folding the very conceptual fabric of traditional architectural orders. Their seemingly bizarre transformations and juxtapositions of architectural attributes and experiences could be seen as tests of such conceptual textures. This kind of observation adds to Deleuze's assertion that "the concept of mannerism [is] in its working relation with the baroque."[91] This notion of working or operational relationships may reveal that the evolution or diversity of baroque resulted from the same mechanism that powered mannerism. As was the case with sympathizers of Protestant ideas, defenders of Roman domination had to experiment; they produced new kinds of art and architecture in order to understand what people register and what designers could control.

Generally speaking, the Counter-Reformation produced two kinds of responses to the Reformation: first, in places where blunt persecution was possible, confrontational and extremely oppressive practices, such as those of the Holy Inquisition, and second, in more complex political environments, a nuanced strategy of reshaping symbolic thought. The façade of Il Gesù reflects the first reactionary strategy. The second approach was developed

gradually by the Jesuits and later refined by other Catholic orders and political leaders aligned with Rome. The nuanced strategy was not an artistic style but rather a dynamic ideological program, possibly what the Jesuits referred to as *noster modus procedendi,* in which the eradication of religious dissent was to be accomplished in a variety of ways.[92] One of the most ingenious developments of that strategy was the way the Counter-Reformation directly appropriated representational practices of the Reformation designers, and as such these practices have not been registered within art history.

Any given art or architectural history book includes a selection of images showing baroque as the time when painted forms acquired organic richness, solid materials were visually stretched and twisted, and the shape of architectural space became hyperresponsive to the forces that molded it. The flexibility of forms and the shapelessness of the liquid state fascinated not only baroque architects, sculptors, and painters, but also mathematicians like Leibniz.[93] Rich decorations and visual effects dominated church interiors. This desire to turn a material structure into a field of transformations and sensuous articulation of forces has much in common with the ideas of mannerism. This similarity does not reflect the mere repetition of forms or design maneuvers, however. It hints that the artists of the Counter-Reformation absorbed the interest in operations that had been initiated by the designers of religious reform.[94] The perceptual fluidity of materials in baroque churches appealed to the same people who were fascinated by the conceptual explorations of architects like Romano or artists like Dietterlin. This, however, posed the threat of heretic meanings infiltrating into new Catholic environments. The abundance of church decorations, emblematic of baroque, aimed at remedying the problem.[95] Whereas in mannerism, transformations were measured by the degree to which they questioned dominant structures and principles, the evocative fabric of baroque architecture was merely meant to visually attract people accustomed to subversive representations. The sheer quantity of new decorations and the intensity of visual experiences were to disarm any critical specificity in these borrowed practices. Ocular fascination was intended to replace critical reflection about the relationships of politics and religion. This exploitation of preexisting interests (while silencing their rebellious meanings) created a completely new way of asserting Catholic domination.

Roman baroque recorded the whole spectrum of such representational experimentations, which tested and gradually refined this style of benign attractions. Many architects, Francesco Borromini in particular, focused on the very form of a catholic church. They used sculpture, paintings, and light to do the most daring formal experiments. Jesuit artists remained in the avant-garde of these efforts. Between 1691 and 1694, Andrea Pozzo painted *Allegory of the Missionary Work of the Jesuits* in the church of St. Ignazio in Collegio

Figure 3.19

Romano, an intellectual powerhouse of the order. Figure 3.19 shows this ceiling mural the way it is featured most frequently in architecture history books. Such fabricated illusions of space became inseparable from baroque church decorations. Murals on vaulted ceilings almost always included some realistic depiction of architectural elements, but also human figures and clouds. In this composition, people, angels, and the sky are depicted in colors while the architecture is grayish like the stones of the church below. All these elements simulate three-dimensionality because they are organized according to a precise knowledge of aerial and geometric perspective, properties of colors, and chiaroscuro, the correct distribution of light and shadow. The painterly sensation of depth in the mural is truly astounding; it forces a suspension of disbelief. A spatial illusion of the painting alone would not be able to create this overwhelming impression. After all, the Renaissance was the time when painted illusion of space alone revolutionized symbolic thought. The whole building integrates the material and the illusionary constructions. In St. Ignazio, as in many other baroque churches, the space of the interior is clearly divided into two symbolic realms: the material structure below and the painted domain of religious ideas above. The relationship between them is essential for the constitution of this symbolic space of representation. As Deleuze says, "It might be claimed that the physical gravity and religious elevation are quite different and do not pertain to the same world. However, these are two vectors that are allotted as such in the distinction of the two levels or floors of a single and the same world, or of the single and the same house."[96] Thus one way of thinking about this interior highlights its relationship to the philosophical ideas of its time. This environment seemingly ignores the politics of religion in order to deal with a more abstract dilemma. The interior establishes a perfect alignment between the newly polarized spiritual and material realms. Although the photo primarily focuses on the painted vault, elements on the perimeter of Figure 3.19 (and

Figure 3.20

especially its lower part) show how the building blends perceptually and geometrically with the painting. From the place the picture was taken, the two symbolic levels of the space—the space of physical gravity and the religious realm above—appear in total agreement. By combining traditional religious dogma with the new knowledge of physics and mathematics, the Church restores its symbolic integrity and leadership.

Another way of looking at this space of representation reveals an even more nuanced manipulation of meanings, a direct reference to the subversive practices of the Reformation. Although a majority of architectural history books emphasize the experiential spectacle captured in Figure 3.19, this single image is insufficient to show how this space of representation actually operates.

Figure 3.20 shows a collection of views from the church, a multiple depiction of what a person could see if he or she moved within the main nave and looked at the area of the interior depicted in the bottom of Figure 3.19. Although small, these pictures capture some aspects of this unusual experience. All photographs taken from places on the perimeter of the main nave are placed on the perimeter of Figure 3.20. They reveal that the two symbolic levels of the interior are no longer aligned. Everything that produced the impression of perfect continuity in Figure 3.19 becomes disturbing in these other views. It is as if the monumental buildings depicted on the ceiling, still appearing real and heavy, were about to tumble down on the people below. Today, cinematic techniques make us less sensitive to dramatic visual effects like this one, but this experience must have created a visceral sensation of danger at the end of the seventeenth century. The main nave provides no protection or relief. Paradoxically, the place of rescue is not a shelter, not a hideout on the perimeter, but a point in the center, the one marked with a yellow stone embedded in the floor. When standing on that stone, a person sees the view the way it is depicted by the image in the center of Figure 3.20, the same perfect illusion that Figure 3.19 captured. The yellow stone marks the center of projection, a place from which Pozzo constructed the composition.[97] The experience I have described creates unsettling feelings, probes the discomfort of uncertainty, and thus resonates with the symbolic experimentation of the mannerists. Although its elements and relationships are different, this space of representation is similar to what Romano did in Palazzo del Te. One can think about the interior of St. Ignazio and the courtyard elevation of the del Te as visual explorations of instability. However, while Romano left such explorations frozen in time, inconclusive, and inviting critical reflection, Pozzo made his composition interactive and forcefully conclusive. The space of St. Ignazio operates like a computer game, which stimulates negative and positive feelings at the whim of its user. A person can experience this seemingly dangerous environment at will because

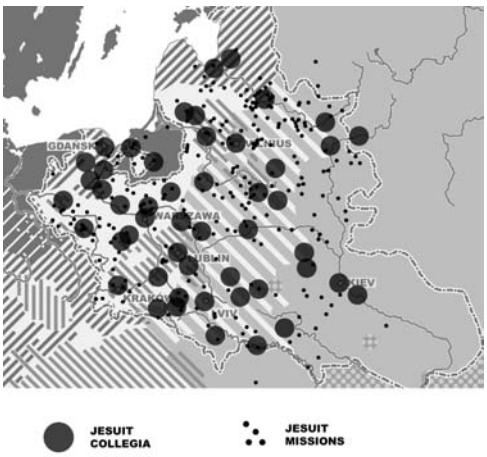
the yellow stone always waits to provide certainty that the impression of threat is superficial and can be avoided. When the symbolic order can be restored at any moment, the notion of danger is eliminated; this practice, instead of referring to actual threats or oppression in lived reality, becomes playful or entertaining. For all who had been fascinated by the complexity and importance of questions posed by the Reformation, this space becomes a training ground teaching how to dismiss religious doubt and reestablish trust in the authority of the Catholic church. It was the superior knowledge of a Jesuit, Andrea Pozzo, that made this visual miracle possible.

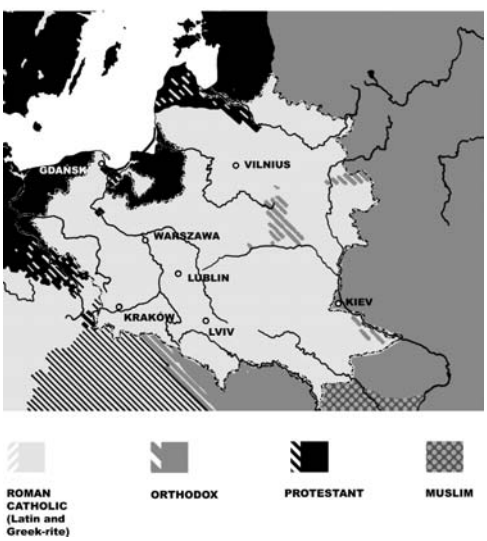
The space of representation of the church of St. Ignazio is only one of the most refined and publicly accessible products of the Counter-Reformation's technologies of symbolic thought. The emphasis on reshaping minds was characteristic of Jesuit practices from their beginning. The experience I have discussed and mapped photographically is similar to the so-called *Spiritual Exercises,* which Ignatius of Loyola developed soon after his mystical illumination at Manresa in 1521 and first published in 1548. The exercises were intended to restore an appropriate mental constitution in new members of the Jesuit order. They are organized as a set of mental activities to be performed in seclusion under supervision of a spiritual instructor and require four weeks to complete. Without going into the multiplicity of connections between the church of St. Ignazio and the techniques of engaging visual imagination, memory, bodily sensations, and verbal structures developed by Ignatius, the most important similarity is the way the church interior and the exercises restructure symbolic thought. The sequence of mental activities takes a person through feelings of guilt and confusion, to indifference, and finally to the restoration of a new and pointed sense of Catholic purpose. Frequently, the exercises are written in the first person, as if the one doing them were declaring what he or she is about to do. In the first set, Ignatius says, "My aim in remembering about all these matters [the story of the angels rebelling against God] is to bring myself to greater shame and confusion, by comparing the sin of the angels with all my own many sins."[98] This process of instilling guilt and confusion is increased when a person is asked to move "to deeper emotions by means of will," and exercises are selectively repeated to achieve the best results.[99] Gradually, as people accept their guilt and inferiority and become indifferent to physical hardship and desires, Ignatius reforms their thinking around Catholic dogma. When considered as a technique of rearranging one's intellectual and emotional constitution, these exercises are identical to the experiential operation of the church of St. Ignazio. In both cases, fear and uncertainty provide a first and necessary step in creating ideological confusion and vulnerability. In time, one is given the mental training to deal with such emotions, which leads to the exhilarating rediscovery of higher order

and admiration for those who can articulate it. Both the book and the church are constructed with a canny precision that understands how people respond to emotional and perceptual stimulation. While mental training structured by the *Spiritual Exercises* helped to prepare the elite of leaders, art and architecture provided the tools for reshaping the thoughts of the masses. This kind of representational technology grew out of the nuanced strategy of the Counter-Reformation and proved most useful in places of diverse symbolic thinking and political freedoms, like the asylum hereticorum of the commonwealth.

Architecture and the Counter-Reformation in the Commonwealth

Starting in 1814 and ending in 1939, the Jesuits undertook the task of writing their own official history.[100] In Poland, the most prominent among those historians was Stanisław Załęski who, between 1900 and 1906, after studying the history of the eastern provinces, wrote five volumes of the history of the Jesuits in Poland (actually in the commonwealth). In his introduction, Załęski calls Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the mid-sixteenth century an "anomaly of Europe" and then elaborates on particular political facts to substantiate that assertion.[101] He points out that, since 1548, in *Ministeryum* and *Senat* (the highest institutions of Polish government) there were 222 non-Catholic members and that in 1570 the lay part of the *Senat* included only two Catholics.[102] The traditional control of the Roman Catholic Church over political life in Poland was declining, but it was an anomaly only from the point of view of Rome. It seems, however, that for the Jesuits the most significant events started to unfold in 1552 when *Sejm*, the Polish parliament, was, according to Załęski, turned into a synod, which questioned the jurisdiction Catholic bishops still had over people of other confessions in matters of religion. It was, in his view, a political assault that led to the more general threat of 1555. In that year, the king became susceptible to the notion of a national Polish Church. It was actually more than a general idea. This legal proposal was prepared by an outstanding humanist and theoretician of politics, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (Andreas Fricius Modrevius) and included in the resolutions of Sejm in 1555. The resolution was presented to and consequently rejected by the pope.[103] This was potentially the most deadly threat to the control the Roman Church still exercised over internal matters in Poland. In the same year, Pope Paul IV sent a nuncio, Luigi Lippomano (Aloisius Lipomanus), to Poland. The nuncio was accompanied by Alfons Salmeron, the first Jesuit to visit Poland, who was instructed by his general to assess the situation.[104] Expanding the framework of information necessary to record the history of Jesuit actions in the commonwealth, Załęski outlines the constitution and objectives of *Societas Jesu*. He focuses on two





Figures 3.21a and 3.21b

characteristics: their military-like structure and efficiency, and the superiority of education that the Jesuits provided. Indeed, education was a key ideological weapon in the new phase of the political struggle.

Figure 3.21a shows a composite map. Its background is a screened version of the map shown in Figure 3.4, a distribution of religions and Christian confessions in the commonwealth at the end of the sixteenth century. It is overlaid with information provided by Załęski about the location of Jesuit colleges and mission houses, those established before the first partition of Poland in 1772. The location of Jesuit schools generally correlates with regions of great religious and cultural diversity. In addition, missionary houses help extend the Jesuit reach, especially into less populated regions. The Jesuits' task in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was quite openly compared to that of missionaries in the Far East. The commonwealth was perceived as such an anomaly of Europe that it was to be colonized and converted like India or Japan.[105] Figure 3.21b shows the situation of Christian confessions in the commonwealth before the first partition of Poland.[106] Kłoczowski asserts that "if one compares the maps of the location of various denominations in Poland [and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania] in the second half of the sixteenth century [Figure 3.4] and two hundred years later [Figure 3.21b], one is immediately struck by the unquestionable triumph of Catholicism."[107] The Roman Catholic Church dominated the commonwealth almost totally. Jews, although not shown on the map, were still omnipresent and managed to preserve their religious identity, probably because they had understood much earlier how to operate outside of the political hierarchy.[108] Other Christian confessions still existed within the borders of the commonwealth

in the far north and also all over the country in pockets too small to be represented in this diagrammatic map, but their political power and independence were practically eliminated.

Figures 3.21a and 3.21b reveal that, like the Franciscans in Central America discussed in chapter 2, the Jesuits in the commonwealth treated education as the tool for shaping the minds of future political leaders. The kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an elective monarchy and thus it was essential for the colleges of Counter-Reformation to target children of szlachta, those with voting rights. As soon as the new alignment of Rome and the political leaders in the commonwealth became apparent, members of other noble families started to reestablish their affiliation with Catholicism. A wave of religiously correct zeal swept the country. After the sixteenth century, when Poland and Lithuania were an exception in Europe, "a state without stakes," as Janusz Tazbir called it, in the seventeenth century thousands of women were accused of and executed for alleged witchcraft in the commonwealth.[109] Most importantly, the new generation of Catholics provided a base for the radical change of the political landscape. Representatives of confessions other than Catholicism were gradually eliminated from the Senat (where members represented the state or ecclesiastical hierarchy) and were even rejected as *posłowie* (legally elected representatives of szlachta to Sejm).[110] The Compact of Warsaw, although still legally valid, was frequently violated, most often by the students of new Catholic colleges. In another major political development, the Roman Church hierarchy gradually absorbed the Orthodox and then the Armenian Church. In 1596 the Synod of Brest (Brześć Litewski) announced the Act of Union between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches of the commonwealth, but under the administration of the Roman pope.[111] Some leaders of Orthodox communities opposed the alliance and thus the Eastern Church became divided. The so-called Uniate (also called Greek-Catholic) bishops did not receive what was most important for them, their political representation in the Senat, a historical privilege of Catholic bishops. Later, in 1720, the Synod in Zamość even changed the Greek-Catholic liturgy.[112] For many, the religious union was probably justified by a centuries-old desire to find a new formula of coexistence in the eastern territories. Instead, those deeply rooted hopes for the reunification of Western and Eastern Christianity were exploited for political reasons. As the map in Figure 3.21b shows, in the second half of the eighteenth century, geographical borders enclosed people not only under one political administration but also under one religious control. The time of theological disputes gradually ended and the politics of domination started to reign in the commonwealth. As in other European countries where a new absolutism grew out of the *cuius regio, eius religio* rule, various political tactics in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania began resembling patterns of colonization. Even today, this is one of the most

Figure 3.22

contested issues in the relationship between Poland and its eastern neighbors. When Catholicism dominated the state, the Latin tradition and Polish language became synonymous with new structures of power. As in the colonies, the majority of those who owned or ruled the eastern territories of the commonwealth, regardless of their actual ethnic descent, ended up speaking Polish and sent their children to Catholic schools. Not surprisingly, the conflict between the Polonized elite and the rest of the society—those still identifying with their ethnic traditions and religions—grew and produced political animosities and bloody uprisings. Kłoczowski discusses various aspects of the situation, only to conclude that the so-called "Catholic Reform in the Commonwealth was much more a voluntary than an imposed cause."[113] Such a point of view is possible if one believes, as Kłoczowski does, that the term Counter-Reformation applies only to practices such as those in Bohemia, where "Catholic Reform was imposed brutally and consistently by the foreign Habsburgs."[114] It is true that the political system of the commonwealth was initially—and to some degree remained—different from many other European countries that evolved into states of political and religious absolutism. After all, it still was an elective monarchy made up of people speaking different languages. Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania provide a crowning example of a political and cultural environment where the Counter-Reformation had to use the full spectrum of nuanced symbolic strategies to regain control. They did exactly that, and left behind architecture that still reveals how it was done.

The church of Il Gesù in Rome was still under construction when, in 1584, the Jesuits started work on a similar structure in Nesvizh (Niasviz, Nieśwież, Niaswiż, Nieswiż), Belarus, which makes that church one of the oldest baroque structures outside of Italy.[115] The front elevation, spatial layout, and decorations of the Corpus Christi Church resemble those of Il Gesù in Rome. Figure 3.22 shows a fragment of its interior. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann observes that, in comparison to the early architectural production of other European

countries (for example, Germany), where design ideas absorbed local traditions, the churches built by the Jesuits in the commonwealth seemed to reject local idiosyncrasies and closely followed the Roman prototype.[116] The Jesuits' initial intervention into the symbolic reality of the commonwealth was bold and unapologetic. Undoubtedly, in regions saturated with buildings similar to Boim Chapel in Lviv or Kamienice Przybyłów in Kazimierz Dolny, an elevation similar to that of Il Gesù's front façade didactically asserted the symbolic message of the Counter-Reformation. The monumental scale of the church and its interior could easily communicate the power of Rome in small eastern towns. Born-again zealots like Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, called Sierotka (The Orphan), who commissioned the church in Nesvizh, needed these unquestionable statements of religious conformity.

Figure 3.23

Figure 3.23 shows another example, a fragment of the interior of a Jesuit church in Lublin, built between 1592 and 1604.[117] Stanisław Załęski emphasizes the challenges that the order faced in Lublin, which was, in his words, "a nest of all sects and mixture of all heresies."[118] The photograph shows the relationship that exists between the enfilade of the church aisle and its paintings, an experiential quality characteristic of many Jesuit churches.[119] The photograph can be compared to Romano's Sala dei Giganti, shown in Plate 14. Like in Mantua, painted decorations create pockets or moments of spatial illusion while arched openings form a continuous passage. As two kinds of spaces of representation, however, the interior in Lublin and that in Palazzo del Te could not be more different. In the Sala dei Giganti, the tumbling mythical universe and the enfilade are completely different, and yet similar; their tension inspires broader conceptual and critical reflections. The painting does not privilege any particular point of view, but rather encourages one to think about the relationships that may exist between myth and daily life. The monumental world of giants tumbles down while the order made of empty space remains intact. Heavy masses of simulated structures cause pain and anguish while the mundane activity of circulation

between rooms offers simple but harmonious order. The play of such reversals and tensions never ends, and no conclusion is offered. In contrast, the passage in Lublin's church is constructed like a theme park with didactic content. Directly reminiscent of the tactics that missionaries in Mesoamerica used to capture and hold the attention of Amerindians, the designers of this space employ illusions to make old religious stories more appealing. While spectacular paintings entertain a believer, the Catholic dogma—the content—is not affected by such trivial practice because it remains in polar opposition to the means of delivery—the form. The painted images come with captions to make it easier to interpret them in an unequivocal way. The experience of crossing these illustrated planes is repeated and thus, as in a slow-motion movie, fascinating effects appear and disappear, reinforcing what a good Catholic has already memorized. The physical structure of the enfilade and the implied spaces are in full agreement. Visual tricks remain only that—technical or artistic means to structure attention. All the elements that created spaces like the Sala dei Giganti are present in Lublin's church, but their combined ability to question ideological reality is gone. The Jesuits' space intrigues the eyes but prevents any religiously unorthodox or critical thoughts. This baroque space of representation makes spaces of the Reformation unthinkable. As in the St. Ignazio church, the Jesuits in Lublin absorbed the interest in new kinds of representations only to empty them out of any critical charge.

The appropriation of the enemy's ways of thinking reached far beyond the use of illusionistic paintings, however. While designers of the Reformation era put ecclesiastical institutions in doubt by questioning the architectural orders sanctioned by Rome, the designers of the Counter-Reformation radically altered such practices. The success of art and architecture of mannerism depended on their ability to foster and direct critical attitude. Boim's chapel and Palazzo del Te, for example, were most successful when they precisely identified conservative principles and probed them in a measured and insightful way. In contrast, the architects and artists of the Counter-Reformation working in the commonwealth opened the floodgates of formal transformations and superficial creativity. They buried any possibility of critical reflection underneath an unbounded quantity of visual and spatial spectacles.

As far as the concentration of baroque churches and the intensity of their interior decorations are concerned, not many places in Europe may compete with Vilnius. It rivaled Kraków in administrative importance but probably surpassed it as the center of Protestant, primarily Calvinist, intellectual and artistic life during the Reformation period. The leaders of the Counter-Reformation targeted the capital of Lithuania with passion. Figure 3.24 shows a fragment of St. John Church in Vilnius, a telling example of late baroque. The altar, placed

Figure 3.24

in a relatively simple interior, is visually and spatially opulent. Like many churches in the commonwealth, this spectacle of baroque creativity is a later addition to an older Gothic structure. Catholics repossessed many Protestant churches and redecorated them in order to leave no doubt about the new symbolic ownership. St. John Church is a central element of the University of Vilnius (old *Almae Academia et Universitas Vilnensis Societatis Jesu*), which played a key role in the eradication of Protestantism in Lithuania.[120] Visually, the altar closes all three naves of this hall interior. The composition is truly three-dimensional, almost as deep as it is wide. The volume is filled with physical elements such as columns, entablatures, and sculpted figures. Unlike in traditional altars, though, they do not create a surface, not even a folded one. Rather, all these elements are dispersed in space and establish complex relationships and discontinuities. Because of its arrangement, the altar creates a dynamic visual experience. It provides a perfect setup for the unusual manipulation of light, for example. As bright spots produced by lamps located in a lower part of the altar show, even in the middle of the day, this composition is visually unstable; its points of interest may be refocused at will. In such a composition, candles or lamps could remain hidden while their effects, especially in the evening, would mesmerize spectators. Such phenomena are

reinforced by the deliberate fragmentation of the composition and its irregular articulation. This spatial construction has much more in common with stage design than with any traditional articulation of ecclesiastical hierarchy or symbolism.

In time, not only centers like Vilnius but small towns and parishes were expected to include such theaters of attractions. In the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries, towns of the commonwealth became predominantly Catholic. Hybrid communities that used to accommodate people of different cultural backgrounds and beliefs were either marginalized or homogenized.[121] The task of maintaining this new religious zeal required not only new churches but also masses of spiritual shepherds. And they came in an unprecedented influx of Catholic orders. Their presence was felt in all aspects of life.[122] Without much regard for the distinction between Roman Catholics and the Greek-Catholic denominations, such orders reached into eastern regions.[123] The so-called regular seminarist type, those orders whose primary function was to teach—the Jesuits, for example—excelled in artistic and architectural production. They created a new generation of religious spectators with a growing appetite for baroque attractions. Illusionistic paintings and the material decorations of altars became insufficient to visually seduce a believer and channel his or her attention. The shapes of new buildings had to reinforce those effects. The Jesuits gradually fell behind in this respect. The most avant-garde solutions were proposed by other Catholic orders.

Figure 3.25a shows an interior of a Piarist church in Chełm (Kholm), in eastern Poland. The Piarists order rivaled the Society of Jesus in matters of education in those territories. The building was designed by Paweł Antoni Fontana and built between 1753 and 1763.[124] It is part of a larger and older Piarist college complex. Its interior paintings, designed and executed by Józef Meyer, share certain characteristics with those by Pozzo in the St. Ignazio church, but the comparison between these two interiors shows changes in the modality of Catholic thought.[125] As in Rome, this space blends artificial illusion with the material reality of the building. In Chełm, the material/spiritual duality becomes irrelevant, however. Images cover almost the entire space, making the dialogue between the real and the simulated difficult to decipher. Compared with the Piarist church, the symbolic construction of St. Ignazio's church seems excessively didactic. As Figures 3.19 and 3.20 show, in order to produce a miraculous moment of visual alignment between matter and spirit, Pozzo needed to preserve an explicit articulation of structural elements, pilasters, and arches. In Chełm, on the other hand, an undulating motion animates both painted appearances and solid masses. The footprint of the main nave is based on an elongated octagon. This organic shape is combined with huge arches opening the nave to a ring of darker chapels and reinforced by dramatic

Figures 3.25a and 3.25b

light effects created by strategically positioned windows. Together, as Figure 3.25a shows, they all transform the building into a fluid but frozen fabric of architecture. Paradoxically, in this space, a simulated construction, the painted gate to heaven in the center of Figure 3.25a, appears to be the most stable of all visible elements. The actual gate of the church, the main door in the front façade, is framed by an implied flow of surfaces and unorthodox articulation of architectural orders. Figure 3.25b shows what a person would see right before he or she enters it. The rounded main body of the church is flanked by two towers rotated sufficiently to create an impression of dynamic movement. Not a single cornice is designed to form a straight line across the elevation. Larger pilasters are even slightly folded in the middle. The time of dogmatic discipline in the façade of Il Gesù (Figure 3.18) has long passed. The Piarist space of representation does not need to be didactic; rather, it must be visually attractive. Catholic strategies of the subversion and appropriation of Protestant ways of thinking were so successful that there was no risk in this kind of transformation of classical orders. Two centuries after religious dissenters started to flood the commonwealth, the Piarists were not concerned that their students or the citizens of Chełm would associate such manipulations of architectural orders with the questioning of the Roman control. On the contrary, the new designers could safely assume that the exploration of formal properties in architecture and murals became a self-referential task. Everything that creates interest in this composition starts and ends within the same game of forms. The only challenge these designers faced was to keep the visual manifestations of the Polish Catholic Reform spectacular and entertaining.

Chełm, small today, was an important town during the Middle Ages, even a capital of the Duchy of Halicz-Vladimir after 1240. Its population was once quite diverse. Today, in addition to the post-Piarist complex, now owned by the Catholic parish, there is a synagogue, a Russian Orthodox church, and a large monastic complex of the Uniate Order of

Figure 3.26

Saint Basil (Ordo Sancti Basilii Magni). Between 1596 and 1875, Chełm was the seat of the Greek-Catholic bishopric, and the church of Basilian Fathers served as its cathedral.[126] The Piarist church and the Uniate cathedral dominate and organize the main street of Chełm, but their elevations make it difficult to guess that one of them belonged to the Roman Catholic order and the other was the administrative center of a congregation deriving from Eastern Orthodoxy. Both are similar in scale, design, and articulation. The interiors of the two churches are paradoxically different, however.

As Figure 3.25a shows, the Piarist church was designed to create an unusual visual impression. Painted surfaces wrap around the central space and in their graphic intensity resemble a post-Byzantine interior. By contrast, and against expectations that the Eastern tradition would imply, the interior of the Uniate cathedral clearly follows the Roman patterns, closely resembling the layout of the Il Gesù church.[127] The main nave shown in Figure 3.26 is similar to that in Figure 3.22, the interior of the Jesuit church in Nesvizh, for example. Today it serves as a Catholic church. The interior—now white—highlights the degree to which its proportions and spatial arrangement follow the Jesuit prototype. Apart from a minor gesture of the dome, which is based on an octagon (not a circle), almost no effort was made to refer to the Eastern Orthodox tradition of this Uniate diocese.

The difference between these two interiors is not a paradox. It shows how the strategies of Polish Catholic Reform became more specialized by the mid-eighteenth century. The overt symbolism of papal domination over once-schismatic Orthodoxy exemplifies the most explicit patterns of the Counter-Reformation. To assert administrative dependence, the Uniate cathedral dismisses Eastern traditions and dogmatically follows the architectural symbol of the renewed power of Rome. On the other hand, when human imagination is at stake, the same architect resorts to experimental representation. Without much reference to any religious content or tradition, the form of Piarist architecture exploits different

ways of attracting attention and creates a visual spectacle. Those who educated the young generations of modern Catholics made the oppressive character of political mechanisms in religion imperceptible. Their space of representation ingeniously concealed the ways they shaped thoughts and attitudes.

In 1997, an international group of thirty-six art historians, mostly from Poland but also from Vilnius and Kaunas in Lithuania, Kiev in the Ukraine, and Minsk and Grodno in Belarus, met in Lublin to discuss artistic production in the central and eastern territories of the commonwealth between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. A key scholarly issue the seminar was to address was the puzzling phenomenon of baroque churches built on these eastern peripheries of Europe. How was it possible that, shortly after the wave of stylistically imperfect—provincial—architecture of so-called Late Renaissance or mannerism, designers living in those territories caught up with the most advanced European trends? In his introductory remarks, Jerzy Lileyko puzzled over the fact that designers operating in the margins of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania reached the ultimate fulfillment of baroque principles. In his view and for reasons he could not readily decipher, these buildings surpassed those constructed in the artistic centers of Europe, like Paris and Rome.[128] Lileyko describes that remarkable architecture: "The walls of churches are treated as if made of flexible material; their façades flow in ripples. They avoid not only flat surfaces but even straight lines; even cornices are not horizontal, they ascend or descend in curvilinear motion . . . columns not parallel, niches alternately deep or shallow, with figures or without, the skyline of gables dynamically undulated."[129]

Figure 3.27 well illustrates such architecture. This no-longer-existing church was built in the once-small village of Berezvec (Berezwecz, Беразьвечча, Березвечье, Bieraźviečča, Беразвечча), today on the outskirts of Hlybokaye (Глыбокае, Głębokie, Glubokoye, Глубокое, Hłybokaje) in Belarus.[130] Many sacral buildings in the eastern territories of the commonwealth experimented with this kind of architectural articulation, but the one in Berezvec amounts to a tectonic miracle. The building is simultaneously monumental and made of seemingly fragile materials. Its huge façade looks as if it is rippling in the wind. The wall folds to such a degree that the columns on wave crests look as if they were about to free themselves from the structure.

Lileyko speculated on the nature and origin of those artistic phenomena. He admired such an enchanting play of forms and saw in it the ultimate manifestation of unbounded artistic expression. Such "freedom of imagination and creativity," he said, was possible because designers in eastern regions of the commonwealth were less repressed than their professional colleagues in West European centers. Artists and intellectuals in the

Figure 3.27

East avoided the duplicity of Western Europe, especially that of France, and "understood artistic freedom literally and fully." Moreover, Lileyko suggested that architecture of this kind resulted from the encounter between two opposites: the "subversive intellectualism" of the West and the "authentic faith and piety still present in Lviv and Vilnius." Finally, he proposed that unspoiled and passionate religious faith was the spiritual force that inspired designers and directed them in that land of devout Catholicism and freedom.[131]

Examples discussed in this chapter could not lead to a more different conclusion. If Philibert and the independent thinkers that followed him were duplicitous, it was their way of facing the oppressive powers that controlled their lives. At least they preserved the ability to think about the complexity of the world around them. In contrast, representations similar to the elevation in Berezvec are symptomatic of repressive mechanisms that made the intellectual environment of the asylum hereticorum inaccessible. Spectacular features of such buildings divert attention from the fact that this architecture participated in the process of suppressing local culture, its traditional beliefs, and complexities of ideas once brought by religious dissenters. It is not a coincidence that the church belonged to a large monastic complex of Basilian Fathers. They played a key role in the Latinization of the Uniate Church. After 1617, the order was radically reformed by metropolitan Welamin Rutski, who used the Society of Jesus as a model. In close collaboration with the Jesuits, he transformed these previously Orthodox orders into the Counter-Reformation elite of the Greek-Catholic denomination.[132] Like the Jesuits and Piarists, the Basilians specialized in education—in shaping imagination and sensitivity in the eastern territories.

One may ask: was the Counter-Reformation as successful as the map in Figure 3.21b implies? Is it really possible to eradicate so completely the ways of thinking generated by a society as diverse and vibrant as the one that flourished in the asylum hereticorum? Unfortunately, the answer must be yes. And it is not just that the Catholic administration gained control over almost all the lands of the commonwealth and that people living on the state's borders had to conform to one ideology. This kind of success would be still reversible.[133] The real measure of Catholic Reform's political domination in the territories of the commonwealth is that, after centuries, an international symposium could be organized that was so perfectly and uncritically aligned with the strategies of the Counter-Reformation. All those efforts aimed at erasing the thinkability of critical or independent ideas are still in operation. They redirected attention away from the legacy of the Reformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but more importantly, they preempted the knowledge of that historical reality for centuries to come. The politically naive admiration

for architecture similar to the church in Berezvec still replaces a critical insight into representational practices of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.[134] That kind of knowledge operates like the façade in Berezvec. The self-referential composition of the Basilian church was designed to provide instant gratification of a visually pleasing effect. The experiments of the Reformation, those nuanced attempts at revealing the arbitrary or oppressive nature of architectural conventions promoted by Rome, appear boring and/or disturbing in comparison. While compositions designed by the sympathizers of the Reformation encouraged critical insight into the world of interconnected ideas and political forces, the Counter-Reformation rendered such aspirations tedious and irrelevant. Baroque represented reality as a combination of apolitical absolutes—like faith or pure form—and visual sensations so superficial that they may be judged only in terms of personal preferences. It is exactly this mode of knowing that continues the strategies of the Counter-Reformation.

4 Technologies of Thought in Victorian England

Previous chapters have shown that, throughout history, Europeans have made various efforts to control symbolic thought. In the nineteenth century, the desire to merge material and symbolic technologies was still present, but the traditional—reductive and stable—ways of thinking could no longer deal with the dynamism of the emerging structures of sociopolitical relationships and practices of life triggered by the industrial revolution. It was no longer a question of a different system of interpretations; rather, there was a palpable need to liquefy traditional structures of thought, to keep symbolic thinking fluid, and endlessly open to manipulation. A new kind of tacit technology emerged and it successfully targeted the most elemental possibilities of symbolic meanings. The scientific disciplines, the arts, philosophy, and advertising mapped the very fabric of thought and gradually learned to control it. These efforts triggered and were powered by a general fascination with the mechanisms of perception, attention, desire, and memory. An empirical understanding of material and technically invented reality found its complement in a new appetite for explicitly constructed meanings, be it romantic spirituality, aesthetic appreciation for the arts, one's identity, or history. Although this change was broad and involved complex sociopolitical processes, the new technology of thought emerged the way architectural ideas evolve.[1] Architects became only a fraction of those who started to design lived reality. Buildings and cities were included in the category of mutable constructs that could explore the same issues probed by viewing devices and mass media. In this way, architecture was aligned with forces that succeeded in developing permanently ductile modes of symbolic thought—the foundation of the market economy and the culture of consumerism.

Viewing Devices

One way of exploring how and why ways of thinking changed during the industrial revolution is to look into the mass-produced material symbols of that shift. Never before had technical inventions gained a symbolic status and popularity even comparable to the array of optical devices that were invented, designed, and produced in the nineteenth

century, primarily in England. Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer: On the Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* astutely asserts that new techniques and material practices of visuality were essential in the broader project of reconstituting the observer.[2]

According to Crary, the primary shift occurred when the camera obscura was replaced by those devices that construct the visual field as "a surface of inscription on which a promiscuous range of effects could be produced."[3] The camera obscura was designed to shut off the exterior world and then to make it visible again in the interior of the dark chamber as a figurative representation. Its single aperture selectively admitted a view, cropped it, and projected it onto a screen. If the lens was adequate, the image looked shockingly realistic. At the time when the best technique of duplicating visual appearances was to paint a picture, the dark chamber offered images that precisely replicated shapes, colors, distribution of light (chiaroscuro with a high range of contrast), and all that in motion. From the late 1500s to the end of the 1700s, this miracle of a device fascinated those who could afford to experience it. It was much more than a toy for the rich, however. The camera obscura was a material manifestation of a space of reason; its physical space symbolically recreated the relationship that, according to theories of the classical era, existed between the body and mind. The Cartesian dichotomy of matter and spirit distinguished between two independent phases in the process of visual perception: first, the optical, when the pupil of the eye admits light rays and the lens transforms the field of vision into an image on the retina, and second, the rational, when the conscious mind inspects the image and makes sense of it.[4] The camera obscura represented this dichotomy because the optical (that is, material) spectacle did not require a human presence. Perfect images appeared in the dark chamber whether or not somebody was watching them. Also, as in the case of the human mind, whose operations are beyond the reach of one's perception, a person inside the camera obscura could never see himself or herself in the projected image. The camera obscura symbolically proved that the physical act of visual perception was trustworthy because optical processes—those that produce figurative representations of the world—were unbiased, and the mind/person only witnessed what the material device was registering.

This way of thinking ended in the first half of the nineteenth century, when an insatiable appetite for new kinds of viewing devices erupted in Western Europe. Crary discusses the whole spectrum of them. As technical inventions, they identified and targeted certain, previously inconsequential, aspects of perception. The panorama and diorama, for example, targeted size-related attributes in figurative representation. A painted picture on a wall, even if it replicates appearances with extreme accuracy, differs from the perception of the reality because the picture is both cropped by the frame and appears against a larger field

of vision. Dioramas and panoramas were building-like devices in which huge paintings engaged peripheral vision, and, in the case of panorama, made full 360-degree views possible. Light was limited and controlled to focus attention exclusively on the image. In time, a three-dimensional foreground was added to enhance the illusion of depth.[5] Another set of viewing devices engaged time-related aspects of perception, specifically the phenomenon of afterimages. Consider that the act of visual perception physiologically continues beyond the very moment that something is visible, and thus, the blending of images is inevitable. The phenomenon can be heightened by a quick succession of images, and this was the principle behind the thaumatrope, phenakistiscope, and zootrope.

These devices visually transformed sequences of drawn images into an impression of a moving form. They crudely revealed the possibility of the motion-picture technique.[6] Yet, according to Crary, the stereoscope—a still-picture technique—played the most significant role in shaping the new visuality and dissemination of new kinds of imagery.[7] Indeed, its symbolic functioning reached beyond what other contemporary viewing devices dealt with. The development of stereoscopic techniques paralleled and depended on the development of photography but these two techniques operated differently. A photographic picture offered an unprecedented degree of figurative realism in a still image, but it was monocular—as in the camera obscura, only one aperture generated the image. When a person perceives three-dimensional reality, each eye registers a slightly different view. Seemingly confusing, this process is essential in depth perception because differences in appearance provide clues about the distance between the viewer and an object; the closer the object, the greater the difference in how each eye sees it. The stereoscope was designed to replicate this process of binocular vision using two complementary photographic images. The two photos had to be taken by a camera with two lenses corresponding to the position of two eyes. When inserted into the stereoscope, the prints were positioned in such a way that each eye could see one respective image and then, even when pictures were grainy and black and white, one could visually experience the sensation of depth in the photographs. By exploring the issue of the binocular character of vision, the invention of the stereoscope was more than a technical discovery; it was a material manifestation of the essential role that the thinking subject plays in visual perception. The apparatus proved that the non-optical act of fusing two different images results in a better simulation of perceived reality. Unlike in the model of the camera obscura, where the mind/observer only witnessed a perfect and fully shaped image created by the optical apparatus, the stereoscope revealed that the mind dynamically negotiates seemingly confusing overlaps of views in order to fully decipher the three-dimensional characteristics of depicted space.

Moreover, it was no longer a matter of philosophical or scientific debate; the masses of people who tried this simple device learned firsthand that it was their conscious effort that turned the initial confusion into the amazing experience of objects positioned in space. These new observers did more than witness already-captured visual records; they actively participated in the production of the visual experience. This was the quality that defined the symbolic function of the stereoscope and its contribution to a broader spectrum of representational experimentation. The realm of visual sensation was explored by many other scientific means, but the better researchers understood physical and physiological issues, the more their interests shifted away from mere visuality and to the thinking itself. The stereoscope indicated this new attitude for the masses. Each viewer must have anticipated the three-dimensional relationships of objects in the visually overlapping images in order to see the depth of space. This practical acknowledgment that perception is not unbiased, that what one knows, expects, or desires shapes what one can see, constituted so profound a departure from the old ways of thinking that it required a new definition of the term "sensation." The one that emerged emphasized attention as "a constitutive (and destabilizing) component of perception."[8]

Consequently, when thinking was assumed inseparable from physical and physiological processes of registering reality, the primary question became: how do thought and sensation relate? In 1868, Charles S. Peirce radically asserted: "Sensation and the power of abstraction or attention may be regarded as . . . the sole constituents of all thought." He also said that attention "in the first place . . . strongly affects memory, a thought being remembered for a longer time the greater the attention originally paid to it. In the second place, the greater the attention, the closer the connection and the more accurate the logical sequence of thought. In the third place, by attention a thought may be recovered which has been forgotten."[9] In his body of theoretical work, Peirce, a cofounder of semiotics, explored connections between what one registers and the meanings one associates with such sensations. At the same time, this unity of processes of perceiving and making sense was explored as an empirical issue. A new field—psychometry—was developed to test the psychology of human capacities. Initially researchers explored simple reaction time, the time between a stimulus and a conscious reaction to it, for example, but later they used new viewing devices, such as the tachistoscope, to test and measure the speed with which a person not only registers something visually but also forms a judgment or opinion about it.[10] By the end of the century, psychology acknowledged that every sensation is deeply rooted in a network of relationships with desire, will, memory, or anticipation.[11] And thus not only ways of seeing but also ways of interpreting, evaluating, and remembering entered the realm of new technologies.

The transition from the model of the classical era to that of industrialized society, and especially the evolution of the new viewing techniques outlined here, may seem to suggest a systematic and planned effort—that is to say, that the transformation of the visual field into a surface of inscription, and human subjectivity into a component of the new social and political mechanism, resulted from a discernable project of the nineteenth century. Frequently (with Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* providing a case in point), contemporary scholarship grounds such an approach in Michel Foucault's assertion that the century produced "a very real technology, that of individuals."[12] This implies that, like any other technology, it had its engineers—people aware of its principles, objectives, limitations, and material means at their disposal.

I will expand this view and problematize the less-addressed aspects of those processes that shaped the new understanding of the world and the ways of controlling individuals in it. The epistemological statements and discourses that produced this new knowledge only partially overlap with models discussed by Foucault.[13] The most fundamental changes and shifts in the modality of thought characterizing Victorian England emerged like design ideas—they produced perceivable and material outcomes before anybody could theorize or even describe the mechanisms generating them. Visual and spatial practices played an essential role in shaping this new way of thinking symbolically. Large numbers of people not only experienced but also experimented with new representational practices as ways of registering, recording, interpreting, and evaluating the world around them. The objectives of these efforts as well as the material products of such practices evolved with those experiments. Mass media accelerated the process. Those who triggered these developments and those who were subjected to this new technology of individuals did not need to fully understand the stakes and the scope of the shift taking place in order to refine the emerging mechanism of symbolic thought and knowledge. While these practices were open to innovation and their field of operation was broad and fragmented, the new capitalist economy selectively reinforced what supported its interests.

Before turning to the spectrum of these representational practices, two additional viewing devices that function in the emergence of modern technologies of thought deserve special attention. In *Techniques of the Observer,* Crary's discussion of the kaleidoscope is somehow less conclusive than his discussion of other devices; it is almost marginal in the general argument of the book. In its construction and operation, the kaleidoscope was different from all other devices that experimented with the perception of figurative representation. It is a simple instrument designed to create multiple but geometrically structured reflections of random forms. Two mirrors or smooth reflective surfaces, together with one

nonreflective surface, create a viewing tube. Its one end is open for looking inside and the other forms a container for small loose objects like colored glass, tinsel, or beads. Images within Plate 15 show an example of an inexpensive kaleidoscope in which the object's end opens up to the side and is glazed to admit light. One of these pictures reveals that pieces of colored tinsel, similar to those used for wrapping candies, were placed and are clearly visible inside of the kaleidoscope. Some are folded to increase their mass. All reflect light, and their wrinkled surfaces glitter. The triangular surface in their background is made of white paper to enhance the luminosity of those reflections. This is an example of a later, easy-to-mass-produce English device, but other types, even when constructed on stands and with wood and brass, were based on the same principle. These more expensive models were designed in such a way that the tube was closed by two layers of glass with small objects placed between them. Even then, one could easily recognize that the loose objects were in themselves simple and random. As the pictures show, when a person looks inside, the view consists of eight (or six, depending on the angle between mirrors) wedge-shaped identical parts forming a disk of geometrical composition. One of the parts, at the top of each picture here, is the view of actual pieces of tinsel. Other elements are mere reflections of the first one, repeated according to rules of symmetry. The pattern not only highlights this ordering logic but also permits one to zoom in and out, to see the overall complexity of this composition, and to focus on any of its particular relationships. It is easy, without losing sense of the ordered totality, to switch attention from the big picture to a fragment. This paradoxically easy complexity is self-referential—it is a repetitive composition made of the same elements and relationships. Even with the large number of pieces, the pattern remains easy to comprehend; all its relationships conform to one logic—that of symmetry.

Another feature that made the kaleidoscope appealing was its responsiveness to human action. As pictures in Plate 15 show, the slightest movement, such as turning, taping, or shaking, causes an immediate change in the arrangement of pieces, while the principle of the composition remains unaltered. Sir David Brewster, the designer of the kaleidoscope, saw it as the highest class of machinery because it was speeding up the artistic invention of beautiful and precise shapes.[14] Many saw it as a "scientific toy." While a physical apparatus, it foregrounds abstraction, transforming known and familiar appearances into a superior sense of organization. The most mundane and common things, like pieces of tinsel here, are revealed as latent with capability to manifest a perfect order. Also, the kaleidoscope offers an activity that is as engaging as it is effortless. This form of production is symbolically safe—it never reveals anything that would force one to reflect critically on what one sees. It only entertains.

During the nascent phase of the modern era, at the time when the physiology of looking seemed to preoccupy many scientists and the general public, the kaleidoscope manifested a deeper shift in modalities of thought. It drew attention to the issue of ordering itself and implied endless possibilities of making sense by rearranging elements of the world. When, in 1863, Charles Baudelaire identified the best "painter of modern life," he chose Constantin Guys, watercolorist and draftsman working primarily for the *Illustrated London News,* and compared him to "a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness."[15] In Baudelaire's mind it was not a matter of the artistic production of beautiful and precise shapes that made such a comparison possible, but rather that both the physical device and the draftsman operated creatively by transforming something that was collected first. Constantin Guys, referred to as "Monsieur C. G.," was presented as a "passionate spectator," "a mirror as vast as the crowd itself," who looks to accumulate memories of things and visual qualities.[16] And since, according to Baudelaire, "all good and true draughtsmen draw from the image imprinted on their brains, and not from nature," a person as talented as Guys created a superior synthesis of those pieces of information and visual impressions he had registered.[17]

The device of the kaleidoscope manifested a new kind of representational operation, one that was meant to absorb the world into fragments of knowledge and images, hold them open to unrestrained interpretations, and then make a particular synthesis possible. It was important that each attempt to organize such fragments produce a precise and new outcome, but it was essential that the process remain open, that is, that the act of synthesizing be more procedural than conclusive. As in the kaleidoscope, there must have always been the promise or apparent possibility of reshaping the order.

Photography is another new technique that Crary mentions but leaves relatively unproblematized. It may seem strange that the stereoscope was based on photographic images that helped create visual experiences superior to or at least more popular than those produced by individual photos, and yet that it ultimately lost in the competition with monocular pictures. The success of a printed photorealistic image is actually symptomatic of another profound shift in representational practices. In addition to or perhaps beyond all experiments in visuality and ways of thinking, the nineteenth century developed new kinds of techniques for monitoring, quantifying, and reinforcing desired changes in the modalities of symbolic thought. Photorealism played an important role in these processes.

The emerging market of mass-produced commodities was the most discernable force behind the industrial revolution. It needed fresh ways of representing, interpreting, and evaluating reality. Representation had to be industrialized—approached like the development of an industrial product or technology. Unlike technical inventions and

material production, however, representational practices are too dynamic to be fully planned or to conform to criteria of utility or efficiency. Yet, mechanically replicated images hold the key to the process of creating interest and assigning meanings to things. Relatively low-cost and widely disseminated magazines or posters supported almost unrestrained probing into such a production of meanings. Unlike the intimate and unchanging experience of the stereoscopic sensation, whatever was printed in a magazine triggered a broader public response and became a part of everyday social and political life. In a repetitive manner, magazines and posters could repeat and refine successful practices, as well as disseminate their messages to masses of people. Commercial advertising closed the financial feedback loop. A new way of representing value in something was immediately verified by the market and its success measured in the amount of generated profit. The connection was direct and the speed of new printing techniques facilitated the immediacy of the feedback.

Illustrated magazines had one additional and profound advantage: they could accommodate a broader spectrum of issues and approaches than the exclusive practices of commercial advertising. They could respond to current events or expand frames of reference to different places, times, and subjects. The improvement of accuracy in image reproduction was crucial in shaping this function of newspapers. When illustrated, they gained a kaleidoscopic quality. Images functioned like pieces of tinsel in the kaleidoscope. Printed pictures could collect the world in fragments of appearance which, unlike in the stereoscopic experience, looked realistic even when surrounded by other images and visual forms. Page layout, image composition, and text could create patterns of relationships and thus new orders of meaning. Photorealism provided the ultimate tool for fragmenting the empirical world and making it available for kaleidoscopic manipulations on pages of newspapers.

The Illustrated London News and Commercial Representation

To look closer into the issue of emerging representational practices and mass media, I will focus on *The Illustrated London News* (the *ILN*)—according to Peter W. Sinnema, "the world's first illustrated newspaper."[18] Authors such as Christopher Hibbert, Virginia McKendry, and Thomas Richards have explored the impact the journal had on shaping the social history, tradition, national identity, and generally the commodity culture of Victorian England. I will focus more explicitly on its representational constructions, that is, on ways in which the *ILN* contributed to framing, mapping, testing, and opening up to the control and manipulation of symbolic and especially visual thinking.

When, in 1851, the editors of the newspaper felt obliged to conceptually position their mission vis-à-vis that of the concurrent Great Exhibition in London, they reprinted "Speaking to the Eye," an article initially published in *The Economist*.[19] The author of the article praises the *ILN* for being one of the first to promote a new art of visual mass communication, which is potent because

> written or spoken language merely suggests thought; and the thing suggested, or the several parts of it for which the words stand, must have been, as it were, in the mind before. The new thought suggested is merely putting together in a new form some scraps of old knowledge. But pictorial representation may at once convey totally different and totally new ideas to the mind. The artist speaks a universal language . . . Pictures . . . have the great advantage over words, that they convey immediately much new knowledge to the mind they are equivalent, in proportion as they approach perfection, to seeing the objects themselves; and they are universally comprehended. They may make every one participate in the gathered knowledge of all. Artists cannot yet catch and portray spiritual abstractions; many of the thoughts of the great historian, of the philosopher, and the poet can only have symbolical and suggestive signs; but all that can be seen—all the material world—may be represented by the artist; and now that his skill can, by the improvements in art, be made cheaply available, it will in future be more and more employed to spread knowledge through every society.[20]

It should not be surprising that in the empirically based world of early Victorian England, seeing the material world warrants the correct knowledge of that world. In this case, though, the belief is stretched into the realm of visual representation. The statement asserts that looking at a realistic illustration is equivalent to seeing the depicted reality itself, and then it argues that the new printing techniques help to disseminate the pictures' inherent ability to transmit true information about appearances.

Remember, however, that the article was written at a time when the viewing devices had already problematized the issue of truth in visual perception. This seeming inconsistency marks an epistemological shift that underlies the development of modern representation. Increased pictorial realism, or assumed realism, gradually covered up the emergence of new techniques of thought-shaping in representation. The explicit character of these technologies of visual reproduction doubled and complemented the increasingly tacit character of technologies of thought. This dual logic underlies the cited passage. Generally,

the argument is grounded in the classical era assumption about the dichotomy between the material world and thought (exemplified here as spiritual abstractions). To argue for the unbiased truth in mechanically reproduced figurative representation, the author has to draw a clear line of distinction between recording physical appearances and symbolic thinking. Only if that division is unquestionable can an illustrator seemingly operate like a mechanical device skilled in indiscriminate recording and transmitting such supposedly empirically correct appearances. Images that deal with symbolic content must then belong to a totally different and exclusive category, one that contains figures produced, for example, by history, philosophy, religion, poetry, or creative imagination.

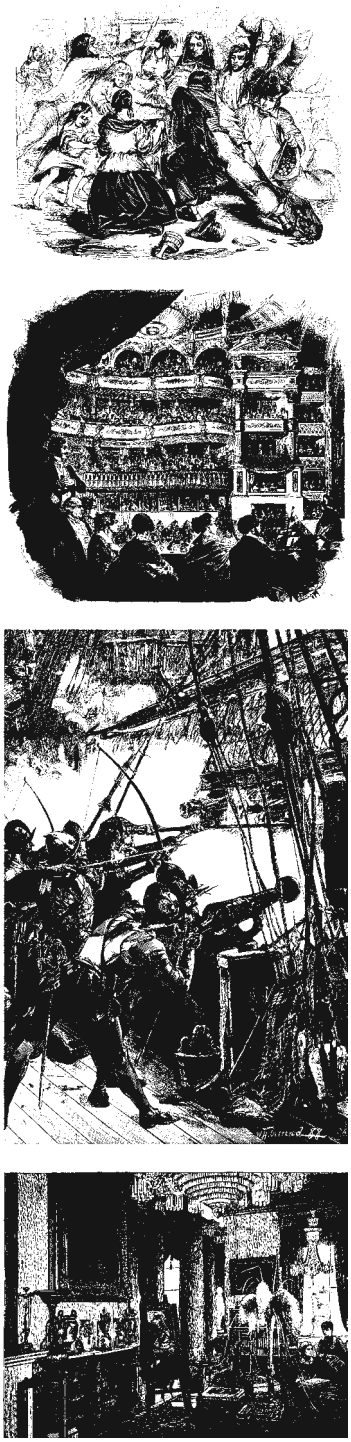
The positivistic argument for the dissemination of the true visual knowledge could not have been made if processes of observing and depicting were acknowledged for their actual complexity, that is to say, if the author admitted that, for example, the process of drawing or taking a photograph always involves choosing what to pay attention to, what to include in the picture, to what degree to emphasize/reveal something. Consequently, the author has silenced the issue of inherent complexity in the processes of image production.

The matter/thought dichotomy, when applied to mass media, divests the complexity from the processes of image reception too. By associating thinking exclusively with language (at the beginning of the cited passage), the author wants us to believe that readers of illustrated magazines separate visual perception from symbolic thinking—that while verbal thoughts interact and interrelate in one's mind, seeing an illustration remains always an elemental optical phenomenon, unbiased as far as image interpretation is concerned. This naive assumption has one profound advantage: it hides the fact that the visual content of a page and the images in one's mind interact, and their relationships guide possible symbolic thoughts. Altogether, the author succeeds in presenting the new image technology as trustworthy, progressive, and unproblematic only as much as the argument manages to render the issue of meaning production invisible. Then, it is easy to present this technology as universal—applicable across cultural divisions and legible to broad audiences.

Indeed, the *ILN* operated as a new kind of viewing device. Figures 4.1a to 4.1d show samples of such reproduced views. They all seem to depict an appearance of material reality, but their representational construction deserves closer scrutiny. Image 4.1a was published in the *ILN* on June 25, 1842, one of the earliest issues of the newspaper. The picture shows starvation riots in Galway, Ireland. The image and the article it illustrates convey information about current events. The caption reads: "Attack on a potato store," and the article describes the issue and discusses the degree of desperation in Ireland. The text specifies places, dates, and reasons, and also enumerates damages. The image, on the other hand, represents that

reality in a different manner. It is appealing in the way horror movies are to those who enjoy watching a dangerous situation from the safe side of the television screen. The more threatening the reality is, the more attractive its reproduced depiction seems to be. And thus the viewing eye is placed in the middle of a desperate situation. Judging by the perspectival foreshortening of human figures, the illustrator must have been sitting very close to the center of action. The composition of light and shadow is not very consistent but it undoubtedly adds dynamism to the scene. While a reader of the *ILN* can examine the image and the verbal commentary in the comfort of his or her home, it is hard to believe that the illustrator could have been sitting in the potato store to assure the truthfulness of reproduced appearances. If not for the physical danger, the scene is too dynamic to afford a naturalistic drawing, and even a trip to the store to observe and memorize these events seems improbable. Still, this fabricated image shows faces, scale of space, and seemingly random material details, and altogether creates an impression of a personal first-hand insight.

Image 4.1b, according to its caption, shows "The Italian Opera House at Paris" and it was published in the *ILN* on February 8, 1851. It is another view of a distant reality. This time it is that of the elegant and exclusive world of French high society. The image seems to show the place realistically.



Figures 4.1a, 4.1b, 4.1c, and 4.1d

It captures elements of the architecture as well as the postures and attires of spectators. For example, the dark framing on the left side of the picture accurately records that the pockets of balconies could have been much darker than the central space of the hall. However, this composition is highly selective in the way it identifies and renders spatial and social characteristics of the experience itself. The viewing eye has been placed in one of the better balconies in the opera house. It is located close to the stage, but viewing the performance is depicted as less important than observing other spectators, those in the center of the picture. A decorated balcony on the opposite side, where the most important spectators are found, draws more attention than the operatic diva whose figure blends with the stage set. Altogether, the image represents more accurately than does the opera house the proper way of looking, behaving, and interacting.

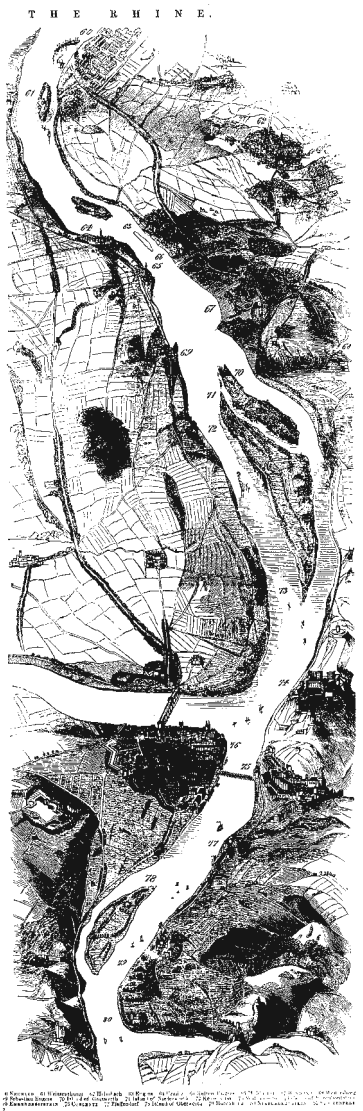
Image 4.1c is a fragment of a two-page full spread showing how detailed the picture is. It was published in the *ILN* on July 14, 1888, and illustrates the defeat of the Spanish Armada by British forces in 1588. The depicted action was distant in space and time from the reader. Yet, the view is personal and creates an impression of a competent first-hand knowledge of the physical environment, technology used, and even atmospheric conditions of the place. As in an action movie, the picture provides a glimpse of a dramatic situation. Without depicting entire ships, it makes immediately clear that it is a battle of naval forces. The left side of the composition shows its human dimension and the right side reveals the awesome scale of old battleships. Spatial relationships are exaggerated by the aerial perspective, and the representational timing is perfect. The two ships could not get any closer without crashing and most likely the outcome of the battle will be determined in the next few minutes. While the image is a pure fabrication, the history it produces is exciting, personal, and believable. This kind of firsthand visual experience seems to provide insights inaccessible to those who merely study historical dates, names, and political factors. A viewer actually does not need to know the complexity of the whole historical situation to visually experience and enjoy this sample. The knowledge extracted from the never-ending process of deciphering the relationships of particular pieces of historical information seems tedious and boring when compared with the immediacy of understanding produced by such a photorealistic snapshot of a crucial historical event.

The last image, 4.1d, was published in the *ILN* on June 13, 1887. Its caption reads: "The drawing-room, Osborne: the Queen at home. Photographed by Colonel Stuart Wortley, by special permission of her Majesty." Despite the claim, this is not a photograph. It is an engraving based on a photograph; its composition and details have been developed in the

same way as those in images 4.1a, 4.2b, or 4.2c.[21] Engravings consist of lines and dots, and all printed forms must submit to rules of this kind of pictorial fabrication. In 1887, the truly mechanical technologies of reproduction were still nascent and, most frequently, the transformation of a photograph into reproducible graphics involved the creation of a new image by hand. Due to the limitations of the printing process and the time-consuming character of the hand-made engraving technique, most of the small details are omitted or simplified and the overall contrast in the interior is grossly exaggerated. Still, the image caption implies that it is a comprehensive record of that material reality, a depiction permitting a viewer to freely choose, as in an actual room, what to focus on. No object, visual attribute, or symbolic figure, including the queen, assumes a privileged position. While the image seems to open up this restricted space to visual inspection by everyone, it is more important that its caption asserts, with a claim of legality, that realistic engravings, like this one, deserve the royal approval of truthfulness.

These four sample images create an impression that they disseminate truthful information about empirical reality, while at the same time they operate in the unverifiable realm of perceptions, emotions, or desires. By shaping reasons for observing, implying a correct way of viewing and interpreting, and legally affirming the truthfulness of the mechanical reproduction of appearances, they identify and target essential aspects of meaning production. They use fear to focus attention and heighten those attributes that make depicted reality personally relevant, play on desires and ambitions to infuse images with a sense of importance, and employ visual clues to imply patterns of political and social conformity. Graphic designers even managed to extract from the broader concepts of ordering, like history, those attributes that shape how people think about distant times or events. When actual photographs were used later, they only strengthened the superficial impression of truth in figurative representation. It was exactly that carefully constructed belief that disguised the refinement of the technologies of thought.

Images also played an important role in shaping an uncritical appreciation for technical inventions and new knowledge in general. Just as photorealism concealed the manipulation of viewing practices, scientific representations helped to inspire interest in new kinds of knowledge. For example, the nineteenth century established the taxonomy of disciplinary fields. To distinguish nominal categories of knowledge, scientists and scholars explicitly sought the most stable and universal rules in which to permanently ground their epistemological models. At the same time, they tacitly experimented with the symbolic function of new knowledge and its appeal to broader audiences. The humanities and sciences



Figures 4.2a and 4.2b

produced outcomes that were as attractive and/or easy to comprehend as their value-laden assumptions were hidden. Emblematic of the nineteenth century, totalizing orders or evolutionary sequences would not have been so widely and uncritically accepted if not for the representational training—symbolic practices that created interest and presumed trust in things invented or scientifically justified. Images, those printed in magazines as well as the holistic visions painted in one's mind, were instrumental in these process.[22]

Consider two examples of such practices. Figure 4.2a, an unusual "Panorama of the Rhine," was published in the *ILN* on August 16, 1845, to accompany an article describing Queen Victoria's visit to Germany. Panoramas, as discussed above, typically consisted of very long paintings that, when placed on the interior perimeter of a cylindrical building, simulated the 360-degree horizontal view of depicted reality. The panorama of the Rhine unfolds as a linear view of the river seen from high above, a view a person might have experienced from a hot-air balloon. All objects on the ground are viewed from the same side, which considering the size of the depicted land implies that the eye moved along the river while registering the land below. The image, one of four mapping the river, was published as a figurative representation of material reality, and if it looked unfamiliar it was only because views of this

kind had not been possible before the invention of flying devices. Such an image must have confirmed what maps had depicted before—the shape of the river, for example—but this new kind of geographical notation is far from being a precise cartographic construction. Conventional maps are designed as geometric projections; they specify the sizes and locations of material features and code information about them in a system of arbitrary signs—circles, lines, contours, colors, and patterns.

Image 4.2a covers an area typical of a cartographic production but it shows appearances of buildings, towns, and fields. Despite its figurative characteristics, this is not a photorealistic depiction either. Visible elements are at best diagrammatic or figuratively iconic—definitely not realistic. Also, the panorama discriminates among depicted features differently than a cartographic map would. One can easily distinguish between those parts of the image chosen to draw and hold attention—those more saturated with details—and those seemingly less important that are barely sketched. Undoubtedly an intriguing picture, it dismisses the polar distinctions made a few years later in the "Speaking to the Eye" article. It blends materially real and abstract forms, true appearance and arbitrary sign, and thus encourages an interaction among rational thought, memory, and imagination. This unusual map/picture must have worked like a kaleidoscope. Its aerial views resonate with regular, ground-level pictures of German towns in the same article. At the same time, it shows a completely new order of the whole stretch of land. Pictures like this are less about conveying correct visual information and more about a new way of establishing a totalizing view. Most importantly, it is visually attractive; its novelty and rational inconsistencies help to generate curiosity.

The *ILN* placed strong emphasis on the practical application of recent inventions and technical developments in areas such as agricultural tools, military equipment, transportation systems, printing, and many others. Such machines were frequently shown in photograph-like views, but some articles were illustrated by mechanical sections or plans. These texts and drawings required highly specialized knowledge to decipher their information and assess the merit of the technical solution presented. This was probably the reason why the *ILN* published engineering ideas indiscriminately, some truly innovative and some plainly incompetent. The editors were more successful in identifying the most advanced developments in the sciences, however.

Figure 4.2b shows such an example, a scientific depiction from the time when photography was combined with scientific instruments like the microscope. The image was published in the *ILN* on November 29, 1890, and it illustrates Dr. Robert Koch's research on tuberculosis bacteria. Since 1877, when Koch published his first well-illustrated article on

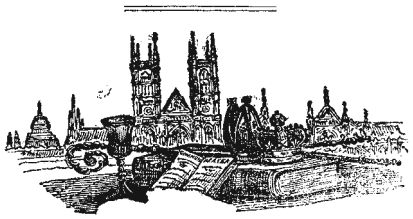
the ways of preparing, studying, and photographing bacteria, he was equally famous for his achievements in bacteriology as for his expertise in representing knowledge. His medical discoveries coincided with the development of halftone printing, a technique that made the mechanical reproduction of a photographic image possible. A grid of regularly spaced lines was used to automatically break a continuous image into dots of varying sizes that reproduced tones of gray. That process eliminated the need for hand-made lithographs, like Figure 4.1d.

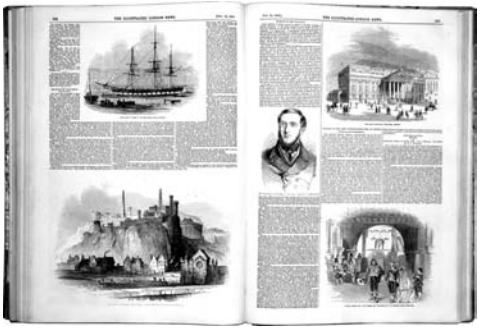
Figure 4.2b shows a visual form similar to that which a researcher could see through the lens of a microscope. If it is not a perfect reproduction, the difference between the actual view and its reproduction is due to the limitations inherent in the technique and not to an arbitrary decision of the graphic designer (as was the case in Figure 4.2a). Note, however, that images like 4.2b could have been verified only by a very small group of people who had access to the appropriate instruments and laboratories. For a great majority of *ILN* readers, the figure of tubercle bacilli was as exotic as the totalizing panorama of the Rhine was forty-five years earlier. It was not the scientific accuracy but rather the visual appeal that made them appropriate in the article. These figures explored and reinforced curiosity about, admiration for, and trust in scientific knowledge. Mass-reproduced images of such developments helped to shape an attitude toward new discoveries in general. Illustrations produced the kind of knowledge that did not require the competent and full understanding of scientific concepts in order to see the redemptive power in technical inventions. These visual effects together with the myth of Western technological superiority silenced broader questions about technologically driven progress. As was the case with realism in figurative depiction, scientific illustrations published in journals like the *ILN* concealed the actual degree of experimentation with scientific perception and ways of thinking about new technologies.

Page layout is also significant, and especially the relationships between texts and images in publications like the *ILN*. Generally, one could easily trace how improvements in printing techniques supported better and larger illustrations, gradually leading to what is known today as glossy magazines. Only on the surface, however, does this evolution seem linear and driven by the quality of mechanical reproduction. The function of text and images changed differently, and their relationships on a printed page can be seen as revolving around issues similar to those discussed above.

Figure 4.3a is an example of the layout characteristic of the oldest copies of the *ILN*. This page fragment was published in the *ILN* on October 22, 1842. At that time, its pages were dominated by text. Graphically, the tree columns of text resembled the layout of a sparsely illustrated book rather than a periodical; the continuous flow of the narrative seemed to have

been more important than the fragmentary order of collected messages or the disjunctive character of weekly news. Such organization suggested that the newspaper was to be read in a linear manner. Unlike a book, however, the *ILN* also provided certain clues about the general categories of information it routinely covered. The headings of these generalized subjects are barely distinguishable from the main text on pages like that shown in Figure 4.3a. They visually merge because their font is the same as the main body of the text, in this case only printed in captions and italicized. A title in the center of Figure 4.3a draws attention only because of the empty space around it. These headings, probably reflecting topics of proper conversations, included, among others: "Church, Universities," "Public Meetings," "Progress of Science," "Literature" (those four are actually listed in Figure 4.3a), as well as "Fine Arts," "The Itinerary of London," "The Fashions," "Police," "Court and Haut Ton," or "Marriages in High Life."[23] Additional titles varied depending on the news, and they included the names of distant places or familiar major events, such as "The Galway Starvation Riots."





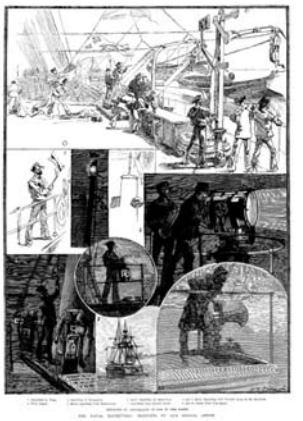
Figures 4.3a, 4.3b, and 4.3c

In the early issues of the *ILN*, like the one in Figure 4.3a, this logic of strictly defined subject matter and restrained statement extended into figurative representation. Figure 4.3b shows an iconic form designed to illustrate the "Church, Universities, &c" heading in Figure 4.3a. Another one was placed above the "Literature" title. Both were composed out of the most literal signs denoting their generalized subject. Thus the news concerning churches and universities is represented by church steeples, domes, a book, a chalice, a crown, a miter, a pastoral staff, and books for "Common Prayer." Literature is represented by books, scrolls, pen and ink, and a traditional oil lamp. All these elements are simplified,

graphically brought to the lowest common denominator of a recognizable iconic illustration, and composed as if they created a themed diorama. These figurative headings belong to the literal thinking that treated text and graphics as generally the same kind of symbolic fabric. While the tradition of printing text offered well-established patterns of design and understanding, publishing multiple illustrations in a journal was as new as mass media. And thus, from the very first issue of the *ILN* published on May 11, 1842, images posed a new challenge as a way of structuring thought. Initially, pictures were small, frequently one- or even a half-column wide, and some were designed in a near-cartoonish way.

Figure 4.3c, showing two pages published in November 1845, is an example of a common layout. Text and images directly complement each other. Illustrations, placed close to relevant passages, were designed to make visible and confirm what the text described. As the figure shows, each lithograph is most precise in its central part; the edges are sketchy and give each picture an oval form. Such images leave no doubt how they guide one's attention toward what to focus on. Even when the illustrations have limited contrast, their soft, rounded edges and the empty space around them make it easy to distinguish them from the highly structured text. In time, these illustrations started to resemble cropped views. The arbitrary border zone of the early lithographs was replaced by the complete-field-of-vision composition characteristic of unaltered photographic images. They were rectilinear and their overall tonal quality stood up against the columns of text. Better reproduction of the gray scale and details produced more of what the author of "Speaking to the Eye" wished for—seemingly unmediated reproductions of objects and events.

Other developments in graphic design disclose less obvious design logic. Figure 4.4a shows advertisements published in the *ILN* on December 24, 1887. This page layout is characteristic of commercial messages of that time. Every square inch of page was sold to individual clients, and their messages competed for the reader's attention. Although these messages are not meant to interrelate graphically, they seem visually unified to a certain degree and share some characteristics. They all use inexpensive lithographic figures mixed with text. This, combined with the basic financial logic of selling visual space in small units, prevented an average advertiser from investing too much in a weekly publication and thus made the page into a relatively uniform tapestry of commercial messages. It is as if all who invested their promotional funds here benefited from the fact that the page layout encourages one to visually browse, probing figures and their textual messages indiscriminately. In all likelihood, all advertisers profited more from such a fragmented environment than they would have if the page had been more structured or dominated by one advertiser's image.



Figures 4.4a, 4.4b, and 4.4c

This logic of commercially fragmented representation seems reasonable in the case of actual advertisements. What about pages like that in Figure 4.4b, however? The page, the *ILN* of August 4, 1888, shows, as its caption says, "The Naval Manœuvres: Sketches by our Special Artist." The layout consists primarily of numbered images and an explanatory list below. Layouts of Figures 4.4a and 4.4b have a lot in common. Visual representation of naval exercises consists of multiple images similar in size and loosely organized on the page. If some of them draw attention, it is due to the use of denser tonal qualities than those of line drawings. The overall effect is similar to Figure 4.4a. The composition of naval sketches seems intentionally arbitrary; shapes of larger elements, their position, and degree of visibility seem totally unrelated to the content they frame. It is as if an effort was made to show that reality in such a way that a reader is encouraged to freely choose what to focus on, as in visually browsing the commercial page. Fragmented page arrangements were very popular in later issues of the *ILN*. They were used to represent foreign countries, factories and their operations, prisons, houses of the rich and famous, current political events, and other subjects. These collections of loosely organized sketches resonated with the visual logic of a personal scrapbook, a hobby that was widely popular in Victorian England. These were all experiments with blurring the distinction between commercial promotion and representations of lived reality—a fascinating spectrum of which were published in the *ILN*.

This blending of commercial and noncommercial aspects of life occurred primarily on a subconscious level because the process was carefully protected by the impression that these changes are fully controlled. Rich and dynamic experimentation with new ways of making sense had its representational double—the realm of proper values, clear distinctions, and

truthful knowledge—that seemingly guarded the conservative worldview. The *ILN* exemplified how that protection operated. While the editors supported radical explorations in ways of producing images, looking, recording, and perceiving, they kept the text layout unchanged. Throughout the Victorian era, the *ILN* categorized, announced, and graphically delivered textual messages in almost the same way.

Figure 4.4c shows a page from the December 8, 1888, issue of the *ILN*, and it contains two articles and an advertisement.[24] The text in the right column is devoted to different naval maneuvers; the other article discusses musical performances. As in all other *ILN* issues of that time, the text consists of three columns. The font used for headings of the generalized subject is almost the same as it was in 1842. Its size was only about one point larger than the main text and was no longer italicized. The headings still practically blend with the main text. This seems illogical or impractical. While the visually understated headings in Figure 4.3a were discernable when pages were relatively uniform and small images reinforced the titles, all this changed by the end of the nineteenth century. As Figures 4.4a and 4.4c show, the *ILN*'s pages became saturated with commercial messages using bold graphics and different font faces to draw attention. It was as if those proper subjects like "Music" maintained their symbolic integrity and were completely immune to the changes triggered by the commercial experimentation. The pattern of announcing a proper subject indiscriminately repeated the visual order established in the earliest issues of the *ILN*, and in this way created an impression that clear distinctions between commercial and noncommercial messages were still possible; more than that, these distinctions were to be treated as obvious and unquestionable by *ILN* readers. The way these socially correct subjects were discussed did not change much either, because the topics and the ways of presenting them seemingly protected purity, truth, honesty, or at least elegance, in things worthy of knowing and discussing. It was not a self-conscious conspiracy but rather a commonly accepted and repeated practice of denial, concealing the degree to which commercial forces had already reshaped traditional ways of thinking.

Advertising was at the very center of these processes. When supported by mechanisms of commercial promotion, new representational ideas were quickly materialized, disseminated, and their success measured by the profit they generated. The *ILN* served as a perfect laboratory for such experimentation. Among the many brands and commercial designers that published in the *ILN*, one deserves special attention: Pears Soap Company, with Thomas J. Barratt as its advertising manager. The company was established as a common barbershop in 1789, after Andrew Pears had moved to London from his native Cornish village of Mevagissey. His brand-name soap became famous and truly profitable after 1875, however, when Barratt took over the management of distribution and revolutionized its promotional

strategies.[25] Perfectly exemplifying the entrepreneurial spirit of Victorian England, his greatest skill was his ability to see the lived reality as symbolically, legally, and economically dynamic—that is, consisting of institutions, rules, and practices of varied stability and openness. People like Barratt acted symbolically on a seemingly conflicted constellation of concepts and practices and sought opportunities where fixed or prescribed ideas were in tension with amorphous and changing ones. Things difficult to imagine, define, or judge—but intriguing—created a fertile ground for representational experimentation. The most successful ad designers identified better than others those aspects of life that were nascent or ripe for transformation, or those that required relatively little effort to cause a significant response.

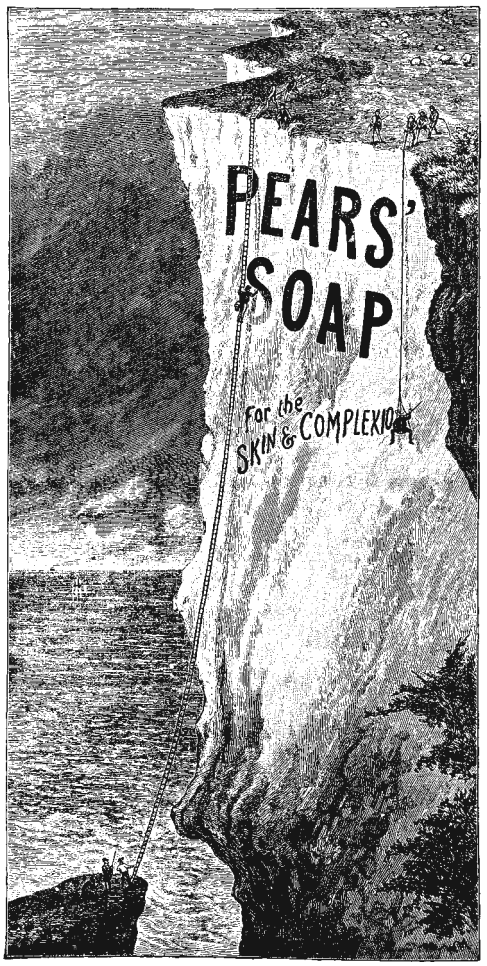


Figure 4.5

Sometimes, it was as simple as finding a legal loophole that, when exploited, permitted something so unexpected that it could catch the attention of potential clients. This was the case when Barratt discovered that while French ten-centime pieces were commonly accepted as the equivalent of a penny in England, there was no law forbidding one to deface a foreign currency. Thus, in 1885, he collected a quarter of a million of these French coins, stamped the Pears brand name on each of them, and put them back into circulation. The trick worked, causing as much legal turmoil as commercial success.[26]

Figure 4.5, an advertisement published in many issues including the *ILN*, October 29, 1887, shows what Thomas Richards sees as an expression of the advertiser's unfulfilled desire to "deface the cliffs of Dover, a traditional symbol of defiant British sovereignty, with slogans touting soap."[27] The symbolic charge (and thus the commercial opportunity) that the Dover cliffs offered drew the attention of many advertisers, including one from Chicago who, according to Clarence Moran, actually placed a huge sign there. The shock

value probably paid off in profits but it also led to the Dover Corporation Act, one of the strictest anti-advertising laws of late Victorian England.[28] It was the symbolic notion of British sovereignty—a concept that was as personally relevant as it was difficult to imagine in material terms—that infused the rock with expectations of symbolic meanings and thus made it a perfect target for commercial intervention.

More generally, advertisers searched for symbolic vulnerabilities in lived reality. The very character of soap as a commercial product belonged to a new category of mass-produced commodities whose value depended heavily on symbolic interpretations. Because it was neither a medication nor a tool or instrument, the performance of a bar of soap could not be easily measured. Its value derived from something not easily quantified or scientifically proven. Barratt discovered that this perfect commodity could absorb symbolic messages unrelated to soap's practical function.

Many Pears soap advertisements revolve around broad and abstract concepts like British sovereignty, history, or identity, those symbolic and epistemological constructions that the nineteenth century revealed as ductile and politically useful. If the superiority of a nation was measured by its glorious and well-recorded history, a client should prefer a bar of soap with an impressive historical track record. This is the primary message of the advertisement shown in Figure 4.6a. It was published in the January 2, 1886, issue of the *ILN*, one of the earliest Pears soap ads in the paper. This commercial construction seems graphically crude and awkward in its attempt to draw attention by simply repeating that it was "VERY CURIOUS!" Supposedly, it is a reprint of a promotional leaflet from 1789, almost a hundred years earlier. Appropriate to its age, the image in the center shows signs of wear. It is hard to believe, however, that Andrew Pears would actually print such a bill just when he and his family were settling down in London and establishing a common barbershop. Even if that unlikely scenario were true, why would he spend money saved in his native Cornish village to announce the current year in a commercial leaflet promoting soap? This must be a symbolic fabrication designed to make one believe that the quality of Pears soap reflects an entire century of refinement and commercial success.

Soon after this initial attempt, Barratt produced another representational construction, one that integrated the history of Pears soap with the history of the royal family. The Pears Company was not alone in these efforts. As Thomas Richards discusses, the symbolic concepts of royal authority were open to representational experimentation and contributed significantly to the emergence of commercial kitsch. Figure 4.6b (the *ILN*, January 28, 1888, and other issues) supposedly shows "Queen Charlotte's Visit to Pears,' for Soap for her Complexion, a Hundred Years Ago." Above the Queen, her official entourage, and a

respectfully looking Andrew Pears, a large commercial shield proclaims that Pears was already "Soapmakers to Hys Majesty ye KING." This realistic image establishes a historical rootedness for an everyday commodity. Concepts of history lent themselves perfectly to this kind of representational experimentation. The complexity of the simultaneous and interrelated events of lived reality and the fragmented material traces they leave created a kaleidoscopic opportunity. The grand order of historical development as well as the constitution and meaning of a singled-out "fact" must have been constructed. In this particular case, as with the turn of a kaleidoscopic tube, generally known historical figures, the verifiable date when the Pears family moved to London, and perhaps certain attributes of the material environment where the barbershop had been located were brought together and made visible as the representation of an historical event. Readers used to seeing historical discoveries and epistemological constructions unfolding in front of them might have found this historical information intriguing but not crucial enough to warrant any serious attempt at verification. In this way, the amber-like bar of soap was infused (nearly risk-free) with implied qualities of nobility and elegance.

British imperial identity provided equally potent commercial opportunities. Columns discussing "Foreign News"

SHOPPING IN SEDAN CHAIRS IN THE LAST CENTURY.
QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S VISIT TO PEARS, FOR SOAP FOR HER COMPLEXION, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

PEARS' SOAP IN THE SOUDAN.
"Even if our invasion of the Soudan has done nothing else it has at any rate left the Arab something to puzzle his fuzzy head over, for the legend
PEARS' SOAP IS THE BEST,
surrounded in huge white characters on the rock which marks the farthest point of our advance towards Berber, will be all the talk of the Dervishes of the Desert to translate."—Phil Robinson, War Correspondent (with the Soudan) of the Daily Telegraph in London, 1884.

Figures 4.6a, 4.6b, and 4.6c

constantly restated the civilizing mission of the empire. It was as if the rationale behind the conquest of foreign nations required a never-ending refinement and reinforcement. Barratt and many other advertisers must have sensed that the issue of military invasions was perceived as personally relevant yet constantly in need of justification, thus it created an opportunity for representational experimentation. Figure 4.6c (the *ILN*, August 13, 1887) exemplifies such an attempt. The title at the top of the picture says, "The Formula of British Conquest." The image shows a group of Sudanese natives puzzled by the statement painted on the rock. Unaware of the true meaning of the sentence and the general importance of daily hygiene, the natives may only admire and praise these foreign letters as a sign standing for the mysterious superiority of the British culture. The caption says:

> PEARS' SOAP IN THE SOUDAN.
> "Even if our invasion of the Soudan has done nothing else it has at any rate left the Arab something to puzzle his fuzzy head over, for the legend
> PEARS' SOAP IS THE BEST,
> inscribed in huge white characters on the rock which marks the farthest point of our advance towards Berber, will tax all the wits of the Dervishes of the Desert to translate."
> —Phil Robinson, War Correspondent (in the Soudan) of the Daily Telegraph in London, 1884.

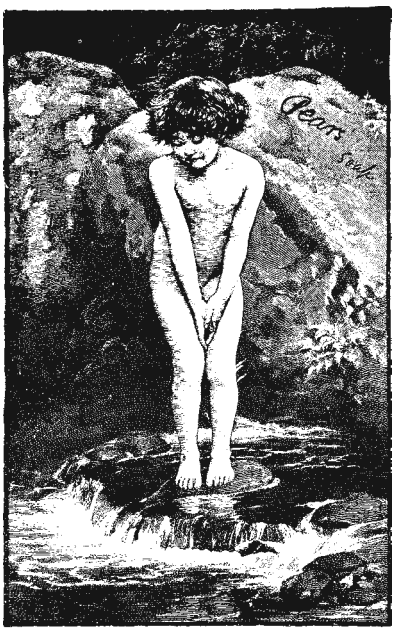
Thus, the caption implies that the British army marks its advances by painting slogans promoting personal hygiene, and Phil Robinson, a war correspondent, supposedly attested to that fact. This is a combination of visual and verbal messages, pictorial realism, and play of imagination, interpretations explicitly exploiting stereotypes and, supposedly, grounded in the professional reporting of current events. The overall message affirms British superiority and makes Pears soap into a symbol of civilized life. This is a representational device, neither true nor false, that focuses on desires, ambitions, and insecurities to channel and redirect them for a commercial gain. If this ad works, it intentionally leaves the Sudanese people distant and obscure; at their expense, the ad makes it easier for an average British citizen to literally buy into the myth of the imperial glory by purchasing a bar of soap.

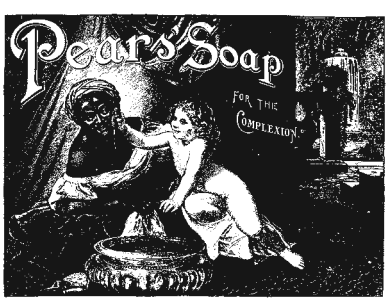
Barratt, better than many others, sensed which cultural practices were charged with commercially useful potency and unapologetically pursued them. He is known to be the first to blur the distinction between academic and commercial art. In 1886, Sir John Everett Millais, at the end of his life the president of the Royal Academy, exhibited his painting *A Child's World* in the Grosvenor Gallery in London; subsequently the Pears Soap Company

purchased its copyrights. Barratt obtained permissions to alter the picture by adding a bar of soap, and after renaming it *Bubbles* made it into the most famous poster of Pears soap.[29] By purchasing the right to use commercially a picture painted by one of England's most respected artists, Barratt revealed that, just as factories produce material objects, the institutions of the Victorian era, such as the Royal Academy, galleries, and museums, were in the business of producing meanings. Artistic products acquired the qualities of a perfect commodity. Similar to a bar of soap, a painting seemed symbolically empty, merely a realistic snapshot of material reality, until somebody (with appropriate authority to do so) developed a narrative specifying its symbolic value. Such a symbolic content had to be explicitly constructed in the institutionalized process of academic analysis and/or properly informed contemplation, and only then the painting could be considered a piece of high art.

Figure 4.7a shows one of the paintings that Barratt purchased from other artists to promote the soap. This one, by John Collier, was published as a regular-size advertisement in the *ILN* on November 01, 1890. Compared with images that were explicitly commissioned by Pears Soap for commercial use, pictures like Figure 4.7a seem timid in announcing their promotional message. The brand name, a small inscription on the rock in the upper right corner, is barely recognizable as a subtle addition to the original painting. These kinds of advertisements did not need to be visually bold; their strength was in the way they teased the convention of artistic value, and their success could be measured by the controversy they triggered. Millais and other artists who had permitted the commercial use of their work were criticized by those who wanted to preserve an impression of a clear separation between the commercial and noncommercial aspects of artistic creation. Barratt showed that in practice—despite all noble declarations—meanings in academic and promotional art were constructed, and they functioned in the same way. By doing so, he was not intellectually subversive; he did not intend to critique and/or change current symbolic practices. Rather, he exploited the fact that it was very easy to make a shift from the academic to commercial agenda in a painting, and that switching between these seemingly polar opposites triggered strong emotional responses among some viewers. That is why he did not want to deface paintings with a bold sign of the brand name. Rather, a carefully measured visual intervention, like that in the corner of Figure 4.7a, was sufficient to draw attention to the picture as an embodiment of the tension between expected and actual practices of symbolic thinking. That is also why this kind of representational experiment caused turmoil among those who had found comfort in denial.

Engaging repressed thoughts and sensitivities provided a potent venue for advertising in general. In neo-Puritan Victorian England, issues of sex seemed inexhaustible in their





Figures 4.7a, 4.7b, and 4.7c

commercial usefulness. Representations of sexuality were restricted by many rules and conventions in everyday life.[30] As was the case with academic and commercial art, a relatively subtle reference to a forbidden or unspoken subject drew attention. The challenge was to produce images that would be publishable yet successful in exploring the limits of what the society considered morally acceptable or tasteful. Soap, the product for daily hygiene, easily justified references to cleansing and partial nudity. Not surprisingly, many Pears soap advertisements, like that in Figure 4.7b (*ILN*, October 22, 1887), feature half-naked women. In a publication generally avoiding explicit eroticism, this kind of picture was an exception. Only reproductions of academic art published in the *ILN*, like Figure 4.7a, could compete for this kind of attention. Barratt's selection of paintings purchased or commissioned for commercial use frequently involved nudity. All such images had one thing in common: they were selected or designed to tantalize by arousing desire or erotic curiosity on the edge of what was conventionally acceptable. Aimed primarily at men with the power of money, these pictures experimented with the boundaries around ways of thinking about sexuality.

In many illustrations, Figure 4.7b included, this testing of the degree of what was permissible was quite literal, a matter of how much of a woman's body could be revealed. Another way to trigger the issue

while keeping it safe within the norms of cultured life was to create a symbolic distance to the depicted reality, thus implying that what is visually represented does not directly relate to the here and now. This technique produced myriad studies of erotically charged antique and/or exotic places. The title of Figure 4.7b is "A Roman Bath," and it implies that we are looking at a place of Roman sensuality, which in a surreal way happened to be covered with the Pears brand-name logos. It does not matter that a contemporary product has been superimposed on the depiction of a long-gone world. Figure 4.7b is a representational experiment testing how the myth of decadent Rome, the repressed erotic interests of Victorian England, and the practical aspects of hygiene could merge and produce symbolic value in a bar of soap. Figure 4.7c (*ILN*, April 23, 1887) and Figure 4.7a show one more technique for exploiting restrictive conventions as a tool of promotion. They attempt to identify and target the symbolic condition of uncertainty about the strictness of Victorian rules controlling sexuality. The pictures depict adolescents, just before sexual maturity. Yet—or perhaps—because they are not aware of their gendered physicality, these figures assume erotically charged poses, both innocent and sexually suggestive. Much brighter than their backgrounds, these bodies are depicted with a high level of figurative accuracy, but it is difficult to determine their gender. Figures 4.7a and 4.7c experiment with the degree to which neo-Puritan conventions apply to explicit signs of sexuality. The commercial feedback loop must have confirmed that a depiction of a young, androgynous naked body generated profit. When successful, these images arrest attention and feed off repressed desires and silenced aspects of sexual curiosity, and, in the end, consumers associate the intensity of these thoughts with a bar of soap—now a symbol of sensuality.

Advertisements for Pears soap published in the *ILN* explored an extensive range of approaches to commercial representation. Figures 4.5 to 4.7c experimented with meaning production but, as discussed, they did so by engaging preexisting or currently emerging narratives, be it those of history, current politics, racial or cultural stereotypes, or conventions of normative behavior. These narratives are better understood today than nonverbal practices because many contemporary studies are grounded in literary criticism. Representational experiments recorded by the *ILN* reached far beyond textual practices, however. If one looks into pages of the newspaper with the eyes of a designer or film director, they may reveal ways of structuring thought that conceptually belong to the most contemporary media. Earlier than many others, Barratt's designers identified the cyclical nature of an illustrated periodical as a key to engaging the temporal aspects of remembering and anticipating. In a way, they continued experiments triggered by the new visual devices but expanded their operation into time.

When Margaret Beetham studied the specificity of periodicals as a publishing genre, she emphasized the diachronic order of cyclical publishing and the synchronic nature of the news.[31] Indeed, one's experience today of an archival copy of the *ILN,* bound and kept in the special collection of a library, is quite different from that, more than a century ago, of a person reading a fresh issue every week. The difference is primarily in the degree of continuity and discontinuity triggering a play among perception, memory, and anticipation. First of all, advertisements published in the *ILN* worked by repetition. Most of the examples discussed here were reprinted in multiple issues. Sheer multiplication of experiences helps to inscribe a commercial message into one's memory. Barratt used more than mechanical repetition of advertisements, however. For example, he attempted to train people to voluntarily repeat his slogans. The *ILN*, July 12, 1890, includes an advertisement that led readers to use the mnemonic technique of combined music and text. A woman depicted in the advertisement holds a sheet of a simple musical score, which would allow readers to play it for entertainment. Proper English families had musical instruments at home and knew how to read music. And thus they praised Pears soap by performing the commercial jingle.

The most advanced experiments testing ways of remembering commercial messages did not require that much effort. As Peirce has noted, the memory of a thought/experience is proportional to the attention originally paid to it, and it should not be surprising that sophisticated representational experiments exploited consequences of this observation.[32] Figures 4.8a, 4.8b, and 4.8c exemplify a time-based sequence. Figure 4.8a, initially a relatively small picture surrounded by promotional text, was published in the following issues of the *ILN*: February 27, 1886; March 27, 1886; May 22, 1886; October 9, 1886; January 12, 1987.[33]

The picture was designed to attract the attention of parents, especially mothers. The accompanying text informed them about the supposedly poisonous chemicals added to soaps of other brands, praising Pears soap as the purest and thus the most perfect for small children. The image reinforced the message, showing a happy and clean toddler. Judging by how many times it was repeated, it must have worked. It garnered the attention that parents pay to a small child, adding a commercial spin. But after a year of using this tactic, the visual appeal of such a picture must have gradually worn off. When seen repeatedly, the visual attributes of the child in the ad must have lost their appeal to viewers constantly reminded of the mechanical sameness of reproduced appearances. Thus, the Pears Soap Company revitalized it.

Figure 4.8b is a continuation of all those images printed in 1886 and the beginning of 1887, but it shows an unhappy child who wants to play with but cannot reach a bar of Pears soap. The new image did not immediately follow the first sequence. These advertisements

were published in the *ILN* on September 24, 1887; November 19, 1887; February 25, 1888; March 10, 1888; and March 24, 1888. The time gap between images like Figure 4.8a and the new ones helped to target the memory of the happy toddler. In this way the message reached much deeper into thinking itself. While the toddler in the initial advertisement was always of the same relatively small size, closely surrounded by the promotional text and published over an extended period of time, the new image, Figure 4.8b, experimented with these temporal and visual attributes. As if anticipating cinematic montage of the next century, the new layout placed the picture on a large blank space, with only a sentence of verbal explanation below to better focus visual attention.

In one case, in the *ILN*, March 10, 1888, the advertisement acquired a poster quality; it occupied the entire page and thus strongly juxtaposed things remembered and things vividly seen at the very moment. The unhappy child advertisement was published in two short sequences, compressing the experience and enhancing its disruptive quality. As if assessing that families with small children felt sufficiently uncomfortable looking at the crying baby, in the *ILN*, August 11, 1888, and August 25, 1888, Barratt printed a new image shown here in Figure 4.8c. The readers were given what they expected—the child was happy again.

Banal as it is, this sequence of timed images is quite ingenious in the way it tests

Figures 4.8a, 4.8b, and 4.8c

the degrees to which perception and attention depend on memory and anticipation. The *ILN* provided a material apparatus, a kind of reversed time-lapse photography. Something that might have happened in a matter of seconds or minutes was stretched over a period of months and years. This temporal disturbance in modes of perceiving and thinking provided an opportunity to arrest the thoughts of potential clients. By targeting parental sensitivity and by repetition, these sequences of printed images established a memory of a simple positive impression and then played off it, testing to what degree the initial message enriches or is enriched by later visual experiences. Thus the sequence became predictable and at the same time created a strange sense of suspense.[34] In the end, the success of the experiment was not measured by how convinced consumers were of Pears soap's superiority, but rather by the degree to which the sequence of advertisements identified and targeted a particular group of people, and how deeply the ads engaged their emotions.

In other advertisements, like the inventors of experimental viewing devices from that era, Barratt explicitly targeted visual perception. Figure 4.9a shows a page published in the *ILN*, May 21, 1887, with a Pears soap advertisement on its upper half. As was the case with Figure 4.4a, this collection of commercial messages creates a chaotic arrangement of visual forms that compete for attention. Barratt's advertisement stands out because it uses an optical trick. His advertisement is a perceptual device that comes with an instruction:

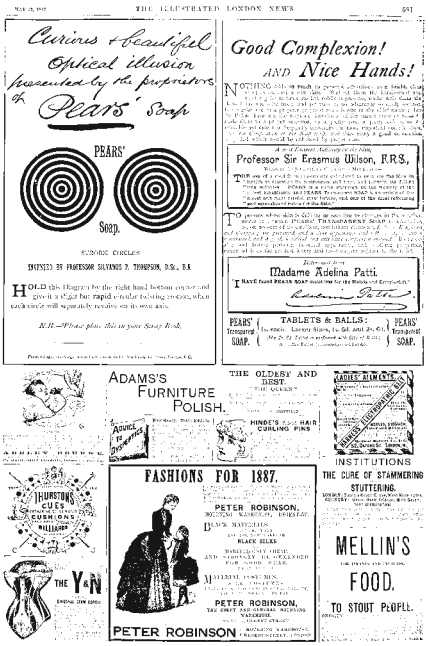
> STROBIC CIRCLES
> INVENTED BY PROFESSOR SILVANUS P. THOMPSON, D.Sc., BA
> HOLD this Diagram by the right-hand bottom corner and give it a slight but rapid circular twisting motion, when each circle will separately revolve on its own axis.

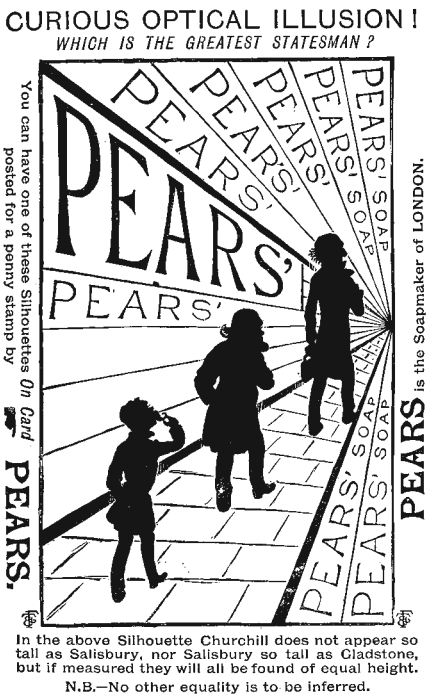
This trick barely works. It was much more important, however, that *ILN* readers spend time playing with it. Moreover, the two circles are quite efficient in competing with other forms printed on the page. Before a person reads any instruction, they draw attention in the same way two black spots on a sheet of paper catch the attention of an infant, an instinctive response singling out circles of eyes from the visual surrounding. Then, the two graphic centers keep that attention because the subtle interference of concentric rings makes it difficult to see them in focus. All of this is the pure manipulation of optical properties and retinal responses. Still, concentrating on this "curious and beautiful optical illusion presented by the proprietors of Pears' Soap" reminds one of the brand name and traces it in one's memory.

Tricks like this undoubtedly fascinated people of Victorian England, and Pears soap published an array of them, but it was the very possibility of the visual manipulation of

symbolic thinking that supported the most interesting experimentation. Figure 4.9b, published in the *ILN*, January 16, 1886, shows a representational experiment toying with that possibility. Technically speaking, the image shows nothing more than an effect created by a set of converging lines, which imply perspectival foreshortening. The effect is strengthened by the pattern of a sidewalk and the way the "Pears Soap" logo/name is distorted. Three black figures contradict that logic. They are positioned as if the men were standing on the sidewalk; they should differ in sizes but they do not. Their heights remain identical and this creates an optical illusion. Because our minds are overwhelmed by the multiplicity of pieces that consistently conform to perspectival distortion, we subconsciously expect every single element to follow the rule of foreshortening. Thus, although of the same physical size, the figure on the right appears much bigger than the one on the left. To explicitly add a symbolic charge to this illusion, the black figures resemble and are identified by name as those of well-known politicians of that time.

Moreover, the image title asks a question with a double meaning: "Which is the greatest statesman?" Other than using "Pears Soap" as a visual pattern, this advertisement has nothing to do with the actual product it promotes. Rather, it invites potential clients to consider the mechanics of thought





Figures 4.9a and 4.9b

manipulation. As if teasing the idea that perception is subject to new techniques of control, and that politics provides the ultimate example of that practice, Barratt and his designers are exploring another intriguing domain of uncertainty. This advertisement must have caught the attention of all those who were both fascinated by the new technology of thought and subconsciously afraid of it—those who felt connected to this new world but perceived that they had limited control over the way it changed their lives and thoughts. This image operates on the edge of things understood, admired, and feared.

While he created all these representational tests, Barratt, the leader of commercial experimentation, carefully subscribed to the double process protecting the impression of symbolic stability. He was truly among the most imaginative persons of his time, brilliant in his ability to see the nuances of the world changing around him and willing to engage all the new forces and emerging instabilities of symbolic thought. Yet, like the editors of the *ILN* who retained the same textual layout throughout the nineteenth century, Barratt found it necessary to complement his radical explorations with an unimaginative, conventional treatment of verbal justifications. The great majority of Pears soap ads followed a simple rule of composition. Like Figure 4.9a, they consisted of two equal parts: one primarily graphic (on the left in Figure 4.9a) and one textual (on the right). In most cases, the textual part is excluded from figures reproduced here. While the images were intensely experimental, their verbal complements remained fixed in their layout and content. Just as the strict and conventionalized titles of the *ILN* weekly news seemingly ignored the growing visual complexity within its commercial pages, the textual columns of Barratt's advertisements mechanically repeated a few testimonials. For example, almost all of them included the following statement written by Sir Erasmus Wilson, President of the Royal College of Surgeons:

> A most Eminent Authority on the Skin,
> Professor Erasmus Wilson, F. R. S.
> Writes in the JOURNAL of CUTANEOUS MEDICINE:—
> "The use of a good Soap is certainly calculated to preserve the Skin in health, to maintain its complexion and tone, and prevent its falling into wrinkles. PEARS is a name engraven on the memory of the oldest inhabitant; and PEARS Transparent SOAP is an article of the nicest and most careful manufacture, and one of the most refreshing and agreeable of balms for the Skin."

Figure 4.10

The content of this testimony is not what really matters here. Rather, these repetitive statements were to symbolically ground the value of Pears soap in a seemingly independent authority. Once again, experimentation aimed at confusing practices of symbolic thinking is accepted as benign when counterbalanced by the illusion of the safety net of universal and noncommercial guarantees. Such testimonials referred to timeless principles and stated unquestionable opinions. The realm of transcendental truth they represented was to be trusted like religion, and it should not be surprising that at times Barratt literally merged promotion of soap with religious ideals.[35] Altogether, this was a strategy designed to silence concerns about symbolic instability created by representational experimentation. By creating an impression of the safety net, advertisers made it comfortable to everybody to play with perceptions and interpretations of the world; supposedly, the essences of life and high culture remained sheltered. Gradually, however, even the need for this psychological prosthesis disappeared.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the strategies of covering up or counterbalancing the manipulation of symbolic thought produced audiences that accepted a commercially contrived view of the world as the norm. Profit-driven representational experimentation no longer needed to operate under the impression of being separate from high culture. The strategies of denial were internalized so deeply that the commercial worldview triggered no critical reflection—only curiosity.

Figure 4.10 shows an advertisement of the Continental brand of tires, published in the *ILN* on March 8, 1913. It can be seen as an early sign of the wave of photomontage explorations that dominated art and politics during and between the two world wars.[36] Figure 4.10 is primarily based on a combination of photographic pictures. The halftone printing technique reveals that the depicted scene was carefully arranged to heighten the trustworthy qualities of the photorealistic representation of reality. Thus the two Muslims, their camel, and the dune beneath them were set up in space and time in such way that the sunlight washes their visible surfaces and produces an enhanced sense of materiality and texture. Also, the picture vividly shows a pattern of footsteps in the sand, which help then to decipher that the

Muslims stopped their journey through the desert, found a place on top of the dune, oriented themselves, and started their evening prayers. Not only the marks in the sand but also a general randomness and complexity of shadows and highlights attest to the truthfulness of this visual record. This logic of material and visual evidence applies only to the foreground scene, however. The background is inconsistent and/or explicitly artificial. It is as if the realism of the foreground was necessary to anchor a commercial message in material reality, while its meaning depends on the unscrupulous manipulation of graphic qualities in the background. The sun, the direction of Mecca, and the realistic depiction of the Continental tire logo become one sign, a literal conflation of admiration, belief, trust, and utility. Distant dunes surrounding the sign are lit differently than the foreground. The hand holding the tire and the brand name written on the sand are unapologetically contrived. Generally, in the overall composition of the image, the lower left corner is designed to look materially real and the upper right corner is utterly surreal. Instead of weakening the commercial message, the juxtaposition of precise realism and the inconsistencies of visual phenomena actually enhance it.

One could see Figure 4.10 as following the same pattern of representational explorations as Figure 4.4c, the picture from the time of the Sudanese war. Although both ruthlessly exploit stereotypes of distant worlds, they are profoundly different in the way they presume the recipient of their promotional practices. The Pears soap advertisement of a quarter century earlier needed to construct an elaborate narrative and institutional grounding, the testimony of a war correspondent, to associate the quality of the soap with the civilizing mission of the whole empire. Barratt seemed to have believed that his best chance to resonate with the reader was to assume that everybody had stakes in the construction of the mission of colonization. Also, to the left of the image 4.4c there was a routine collection of testimonials asserting that Pears soap had been scientifically tested and approved by the experts. Figure 4.10 no longer needed that kind of symbolic aid.

By 1913, *ILN* readers expect entertainment. The Bedouins in the picture praising the Western tire as a divinity have already been converted. The Continental Tyre and Rubber Co. assumed that, instead of finding some new balance between the old and new ways of thinking, readers of the *ILN* were primarily intrigued by the visual quality of the manipulated photographic image itself. In 1913, the religious offensiveness of advertisements like this one became irrelevant, as if acknowledging that everybody has already accepted the contrived character of the knowledge about and representation of distant cultures. Positivistic narratives and cultured scruples seemed to have sold fewer tires than an outright manipulation of pictures and stereotypes. Pages of illustrated magazines were

full of collages like this one. They looked very real and impossible at the same time; they wrapped up one's imagination around conflicted but intriguing experiments and directed that interest to commercial products. They worked because they resonated with the growing uncritical appreciation for the kaleidoscopic transformation of the symbolic aspects of the world.

Figures 4.11a and 4.11b

These trends were not exclusive to commercial promotion. Explicitly manipulated images were accepted as the way to document current events. Consider Figure 4.11a, published in a special issue of the *ILN* on April 19, 1913. The picture shows a failed attempt to assassinate the king of Spain on April 13, 1913. With bold letters for the title and caption, the *ILN* editors announce that they present a photograph, "a historic document," "the only one of the attempted assassination." They say that "it will be remembered that this paper was the first to publish the remarkable snapshot." The picture is quite big, approximately 37.3 centimeters wide and 25.6 centimeters high, and even its small reproduction here shows that it included a broad view of the crime scene. Judging by the multiplicity of people, their confusion, and the dynamism of captured poses, the picture must have been based on an actual photograph. If, however, one looks closer into the depicted scene (and it was easy to see details) this "historic document" proves to have much more in common with a comic book than photojournalism.

Figure 4.11b is an enlargement of the lower right corner of the picture. It becomes easier to observe that the published image was more than retouched; it was graphically remade.

The designer seems to have enjoyed the opportunity to play with the photographic picture and enhance the appeal of its essential features. Thus, tonal differences are generalized and strengthened to distinguish between a high contrast foreground and grayish background. Some elements are modeled as solids and many others—like the hand of the person in the foreground—are implied only by a contour line or are composed out of fragmented pieces like the sparkles of light on the uniforms and horses' bridles. Some figures are strongly blurred to create a sensation of movement while other details, those essential for the story of the assassination attempt, are shown in high contrast and with precise figurative definition. Generally, brush strokes tend to concentrate or dilute visual information and in this way guide attention. A picture like this is anything but "a historic document." The designer explicitly gave form to biases, aesthetic preferences, and constructed visual appeal. In order to publish and announce such an image as a true representation of an important political event, the editors of the *ILN* must have already known that their readers would accept this manipulation as the norm.

Figures 4.10 and 4.11a show that, by 1913, techniques of symbolic thought control were deeply built into common practices of representation and thinking; moreover, they were internalized by readers of publications like the *ILN*. The realm of explicit commercial experimentation blended with everyday practices and knowledge production. What one knew about the world, its history, cultures, arts, or current political events implicitly followed the pattern of knowing commodities and their constructed sense of value or appeal. While the examples discussed here reveal earlier attempts to distinguish and seemingly maintain separation between the commercial and noncommercial aspects of lived reality, at the beginning of the twentieth century that issue became transparent, imperceptible, and altogether irrelevant. It was neither a matter of conscious support nor critical insight into the new phenomena of representation that produced this indifference to changes in symbolic thinking. At the time when images like Figures 4.10 and 4.11a were published, figurative representation was capable of stopping critical reflection at the image surface where visual effects silenced doubt and opened thought to commercial or political forces.

Terry Eagleton shows that, much earlier, Karl Marx observed that money became "a purely aesthetic phenomenon, self-breeding, self-referential, autonomous of all material truth," a constitutive element of "the realm of chimerical fantasy."[37] Indeed, wealth and beauty—or rather ways of thinking about monetary value and aesthetic experience—were shaped by the same forces and gradually merged. Money assumed characteristics of the aesthetic phenomenon because, just like images, it helped destabilize traditional structures of symbolic thought and established a self-referential and self-sustainable economy of

symbols. Thus, it should not be surprising that while advertisements transformed, for example, a bar of soap into an object of desire, the whole world acquired qualities of the perfect commodity too, absorbing arbitrary symbolic associations and a sense of value. It became possible to think about lived reality, cultural differences, and individual people as all subject to the capitalist rules of manipulation of meanings. This attitude was no longer limited to the promotion of industrial commodities. Capitalism created people who operated like viewing devices, who could see any physical or cultural reality as open to commodification. They no longer needed physical manipulation of fragmented images to transform the world. They could, for example, employ a photographic camera, an apparatus guaranteeing the scientific accuracy of a recorded view, to photorealistically represent such worlds as the repository of means necessary to generate profit.

Consider a relatively early sample, a collection of photographs Eadweard Muybridge produced in Central America. Known best for his photographic studies of motion, Muybridge improved the shutter speed of a camera, invented the zoopraxiscope (another viewing device), and managed to photographically capture difficult to observe aspects of moving subjects, people and animals. His representational experimentation was grounded in the characteristically nineteenth-century dichotomy between art and science but also constituted a significant technical development leading directly to the motion-picture technology.

In 1876, before he fully developed his photographic research of motion, Muybridge published two albums, both entitled *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama; Guatemala; and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*.[38] The work was commissioned by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to promote countries of Central America and especially to represent Guatemala as worthy of and ready to absorb foreign investments in the coffee industry. The collection of 260 photographs shows a variety of places ranging from the largest cities to the most remote villages and farming lands. Although the primary focus of the collection is on the process of coffee production, the most interesting aspect is Muybridge's experimentation with the notion that Guatemala is poised for the industrial revolution. He constructs a vision of that preindustrial environment, revealing that one can find there all the elements and qualities necessary to mass-produce coffee—all natural resources, human labor, and the necessary degree of control. If his later pictures focused on the analytical representation of how physical objects change position in space, in Guatemala he photographically mapped the possibility of an economic change—the symbolic transformation of a preindustrial society into a well-organized labor force.[39]

Figure 4.12

Figure 4.12, plate 116 in *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala,* belongs to a sequence called "Coffee, the Agent of Change" and is entitled "Bringing in the day's coffee picking. San Isidoro." Like many other images in the album, the picture shows a carefully staged situation. The low light sensitivity of photographic materials used at that time required long exposure times and thus a static arrangement of objects to be photographed. Moving human figures are blurred when Muybridge attempted to capture a broader view of urban environments, as in plate 50, showing the market in Quezaltenango. The carefully staged composition in Figure 4.12 is not, however, exclusively determined by this technical necessity. Workers, mostly young women, have been fixed in poses that have little to do with bringing in the day's coffee picking. They stand like automatons ready to be activated when the man in the background gives the order. Like human figures in the almost contemporaneous compositions of Georges Seurat, the workers in San Isidoro are evenly spread within the field of vision, spaced carefully so each of them and his/her basket are well visible. The person taking the picture looks slightly from above, and this adds to the totalizing character of the view. Only the supervisor, the man in black, is obscured by another person and hides in shadow. All workers are oriented and spatially singled out in such a way that they look like objects in a museum, a contrived tableau vivant of a supposedly daily routine. The tools and material facilities seem adequate for the simple task of coffee growing, but they are not composed to draw attention. The submissive attitude of young workers is the primary

Figures 4.13a and 4.13b

feature of this illustration. Physically healthy and strong, they look resigned and ready to follow any instruction. A close-up would show that their faces express controlled disapproval; they are not happy to pose like this but seem to have no other choice. While other pictures, for example plate 128, show that native women were fully dressed while working, many of these women are half-naked, making the photograph into a sexually charged representation of submission. Muybridge extracts from a distant land and culture all the attributes that symbolically transform Guatemala into an industrial kit of parts that can be arranged and controlled like an efficient machine.

Amazingly, Muybridge managed to extend this kind of representational logic into depicting landscapes and villages. Figure 4.13a, plate 56 in the collection, shows Mazatenango. Announced by Muybridge as a local center of coffee cultivation, this is a picture of a site too large to be staged like the women in San Isidoro. Instead of literally arranging physical figures in front of the camera, the composition of this photograph tacitly objectifies its immobile visual elements. Figure 4.13b shows how the photograph singles out

and turns into iconic entities common features of Guatemala's rural environment: a road, a bridge, a stream, palm trees, houses, a volcano, and the native people. While seemingly indiscriminate in recording the visible aspects of material reality, the image carefully establishes unusual relationships among depicted things; it enhances their separateness and turns these physical entities into icons of themselves. As was the case with the women in Figure 4.13a, the spacing between these significant elements is carefully measured, spreading them evenly over the image. In a peculiar way, the layout of this picture resembles arrangements of pieces in a typical advertisement of the time (like in the lower part of Figure 4.4c, where commodities are positioned according to an invisible grid guaranteeing equal visibility of all promoted objects). In this picture, local backgrounds help to single out important figures. The directions of light and viewing cause that the pattern of shadows on vegetation is never too dominant. Figure 4.13b shows that, when graphically simplified, the background of trees and bushes is composed in such a way that the spaces between singled-out figures are always subdivided by tonal differences into areas of small and similar size. Moreover, as much as it is possible in the actual view of a landscape, primary figures are shown in their entirety. People in the foreground seem to have been actually staged for this picture-taking session. The only person that moves, the one on the left, appears to be faking the motion. Figures that blend with other elements play a secondary role and do not compete for one's attention.

Altogether, this image operates like a mental diagram of the material reality, a visual way of reducing the lived reality to a set of relevant parts and features. Photorealism makes a direct reference to a place in Guatemala. At the same time, this way of viewing reveals a kaleidoscopic quality in that distant world. All the pieces are materially real, recognizable and verifiable, but their site-specific or culture-specific relationships are erased to the point that they float in this space of representation as if symbolically abstracted. If somebody, say a wealthy investor, turns this kaleidoscope of a country, the pieces will be rearranged and conform to a new order. This way of looking at Guatemala reveals the degree to which almost anything was represented as subject to the emerging technology of thought.

Generally speaking, the examples discussed reveal the magnitude of this shift in symbolic thinking. Representational experimentation, as well as new ways of viewing and knowing, doubled the practices of industrial production and the logic of technical invention. The most common feature of these efforts was the priority assigned to the change itself, assuring that the new material and symbolic structures of relationships were sufficiently flexible. This understanding of symbolic phenomena from the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries is similar to what Michel Foucault discusses as "*déblocage épistémologique*," a radical shift in the knowledge constitution at the end of the eighteenth

century.[40] Foucault revealed that certain techniques of examination completely altered such fields as medicine or education, and ultimately created a new technology of knowledge production and dissemination. In schools, for example, new examining techniques not only helped to transmit knowledge from teachers to students but, more importantly, transformed "pupils into a whole field of knowledge."[41] The regular examination of students, as well as patients in hospitals, workers in manufacturing facilities, and inmates in prisons, created a "technology of individuals."[42] Jeremy Bentham's design for the Panopticon, an ideal prison and a viewing device, was the most poignant architectural manifestation of this new mode of ordering.[43] It represented mechanisms that produced knowledge and politics, those that transformed people into learning subjects and simultaneously objects of study.[44] The nineteenth century followed that model but shifted the emphasis toward symbolic thought and the scale of operations appropriate for the new era of mass production. The representational experiments sampled here targeted attention and sense-making. They simultaneously destabilized preexisting structures of symbolic relationships and infused them with the possibility of new arbitrary meanings. Viewing and depicting proved essential in this unblocking (*déblocage*) of epistemological assumptions, institutional structures, and cultural conventions, opening them up to manipulation. New techniques of image reproduction secured a broad and efficient dissemination of such efforts. In the same way that students were tested in schools, people's responses to representational experiments were examined by advertisers and the results linked to a system of financial or political rewards.

The most profound change was the degree to which the production of symbolic meaning became a common and therefore imperceptible practice, transparent even when rehearsing the most contrived structures of meaning. People were trained to overlook the conflicted character of assumptions behind new symbolic practices and to appreciate the effects of such production. This uncritical attitude constituted the very mechanism of the unblocking of symbolic thought. Consequently, there is nothing paradoxical in the fact that the nineteenth century left a deeply conflicted legacy of beliefs, concepts, and knowledge. This schizophrenic mixture can be found in almost any symbolic practice that emerged at that time. A system of proper—socially, politically, or religiously regulated—narratives, which was designed to serve as a mental prosthesis supporting the unbounded and unstable character of commercial experimentation, generated perhaps the most visible outcomes. Scientific knowledge was deeply implicated in these processes too. New theories and their relationships to daily life provide an array of examples of this disjunctive way of sense-making. It should not be surprising that while Victorian England projected a strong appreciation for totalizing patterns in history or biology, its practices contradicted such beliefs. Victorian society, for example, embraced a deterministic view of natural selection

as the most powerful force shaping the diversity of living organisms on earth. Yet, the same society focused on the production of new species like no other before it. Many dog breeds known today originated in nineteenth-century England because they were built into the bourgeois model of family and success. More that that, Victorians made a dog show into a celebration of their own ability to alter species.

Image and viewing manipulation played a key role in these complex issues and processes. When their operations were covered up by the impression of symbolic stability, these kinds of experiments could reshape ways of thinking to the point that almost any conflict or inconsistency became acceptable. Such uncritical acceptance of the disjunctive character of commodified reality was not an exercise in hypocrisy, however. Rather, it was an unselfconscious, yet sophisticated, investment in making symbolic thought ductile. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in the West, this kind of training resulted in a new view of the world, its history, cultures, social and political relationships, geography, and material fabric. Everything appeared as if made of flexible substance, always open to reshaping and reinterpreting, and the Victorians projected themselves as masters of this kind of symbolic engineering. To paraphrase Karl Marx, they melted all that had been solid in symbolic thought into air.

Sites of Advertising

Reshaping symbolic thought in nineteenth-century England deeply involved material environments and lived reality. Powered by increasingly growing advertising budgets, promotional techniques became so efficient that they produced predicable return on an investment. Not the advertising tactics, however, but rather how advertisers thought—what they assumed and what they actually acted on—reveals how they transformed the understanding of lived reality. Aspects of these commercial practices that were consistent but functioned below the threshold of conscious discourses hide some of the most important issues. The sites of advertising belong to such a category.

Advertisements were omnipresent in Victorian cities. Their graphic design was similar to those printed in the *ILN*. When placed in urban environments and public spaces, however, they had to deal more overtly with the coexistence of commercial and noncommercial meanings and symbols. Unlike the conventionalized and controlled pages of illustrated magazines, lived-in environments challenged advertising techniques with the unbounded diversity of social, historical, political, and utilitarian issues. A commercial message worked when it was inexpensive to disseminate and also discernable (even if obnoxiously present) in the most complex environments.

Figures 4.14a and 4.14b

One of the most prevalent early techniques of disseminating commercial messages was to place them on "sandwich boards," designed to be carried by hired men. According to William Smith, one of the earliest researchers of advertising in Victorian England, about a hundred of these "sandwich-men" marched the streets of London daily in the early 1860s.[45] This temporary low-paying job required no skills and thus drew the most financially desperate people, who were frequently overlooked on the streets of big cities. Yet, with advertising boards attached to their bodies they were supposed to attract attention. Many pages of Smith's book are devoted to the sandwich-men phenomenon. His *Advertise. How? When? Where?* starts with a cartoonish depiction of a long line of sandwich-men promoting the practice of advertising itself.[46] Smith notes that "the present style of sandwich-men is not up to the standard of the age . . . It is not to be expected, out of the small remuneration they receive, that these poor men should create a *great sensation* [a sandwich-man is pictured advertising a great sensation] in the way of personal appearance."[47]

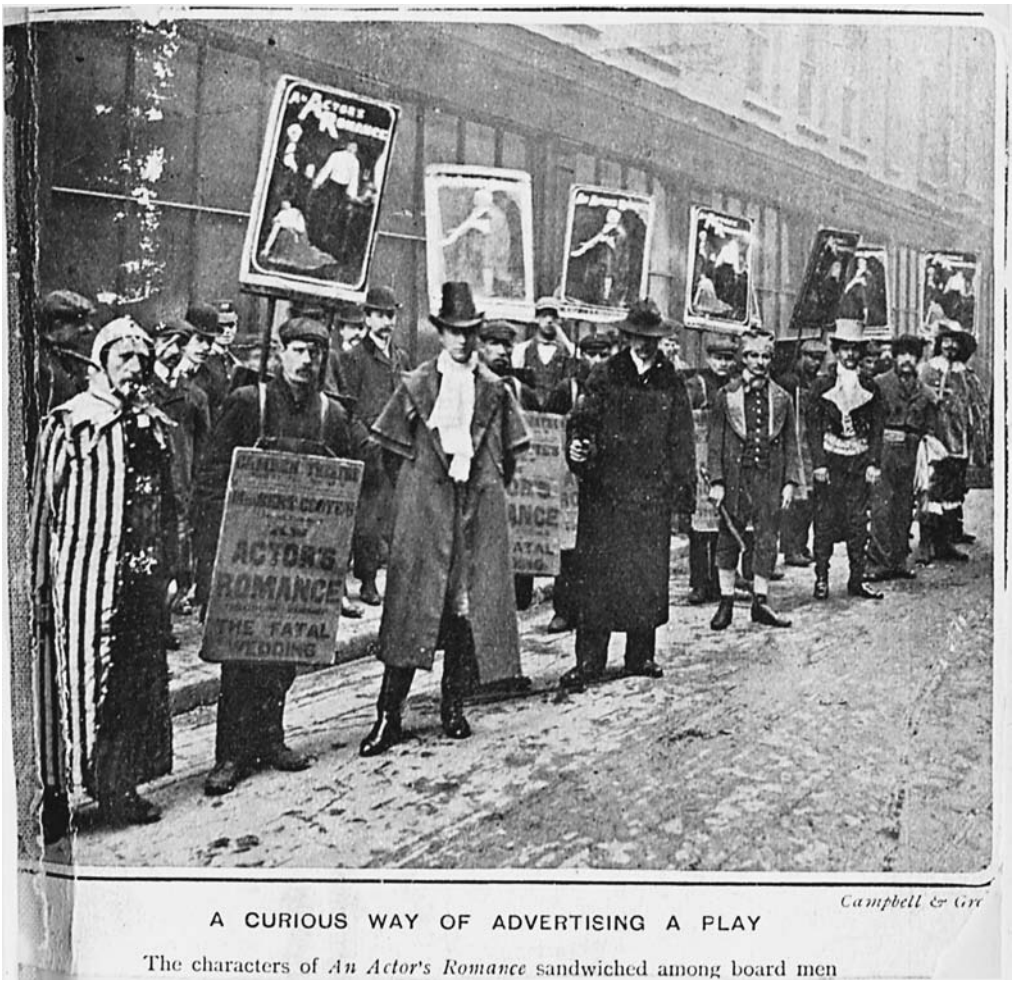
While the earliest depictions of sandwich-men were unapologetically cartoonish, later engravings, like Figure 4.14a, were most likely based on photographs. The figure, a fragment of a larger picture published in the *ILN* on September 18, 1886, shows a social interaction on a London street. It could have illustrated one of Smith's suggestions that one of the best places to advertise is in front of a door where affluent people are coming out after a performance or meeting.[48] The rain had probably just stopped as a group of people in formal attire stepped onto the sidewalk to be confronted by a drenched sandwich-man. As the enlarged fragment (Figure 4.14b) shows, his attire, never elegant, has completely lost its form and makes him

look like a clown. The tension between the group and the sandwich-man is palpable. The gestures and gazes of the people surrounding him leave no doubt that his presence is not welcome.

Although his advertisement promotes hats and suits and should resonate with well-dressed citizens, they seem to be primarily concerned with keeping a safe distance from him. Such a destitute man is symptomatic of a broad spectrum of practices producing sites of advertising in Victorian England. They all seek or reveal the possibility of foregrounding the promotional message by silencing or dismissing other meanings that could potentially confuse it. The drenched, clown-like man works well as the site of the message promoting attire for the rich because his appearance leaves no doubt about how to distinguish between the message and the messenger. And it is not just a matter of possible confusion when the appearance of the messenger imprecisely or arbitrarily relates to the commercial message. To be a good site of promotion, the messenger should dissolve symbolically, becoming transparent under the gaze of those interpreting the posters on the boards. This nonperson, a man devoid of the characteristics of conventional appearance, provided such an ideal site for commercial messages.

It is not a coincidence that in Victorian England the origin of commercial advertising was frequently linked to the promotion of performances. Smith, acting manager of the New Adelphi Theater at the time he wrote *Advertise. How? When? Where?* says that "up to the year 1745 . . . the roadway along Fleet-street and the Strand . . . was divided from the foot-pavement by a line of posts . . . On these posts the bills of the theatres were stuck, and this was the real commencement of the regular London bill-posting."[49] Henry Sampson, an author with even bigger ambitions to establish a totalizing history of advertising, points to images scribbled on the walls of Pompeii, those glorifying famous gladiators, as the oldest roots of English commercial promotion. His *A History of Advertising from the Earliest Times*, however, starts with a photo shown here as Figure 4.15. Its caption says that it is curious that the characters of *An Actor's Romance* have been sandwiched among board men.[50] Indeed, in the picture, actors dressed in costumes from the drama they promote are lined up among sandwich-men advertising the same play. If this parade drew attention it was because, as when Barratt used academic art to promote a commodity, this symbolic arrangement teases the public by revealing what underlies many promotional techniques.

The symbolic coexistence of sandwich-men and actors shows that they have a lot in common in the symbolic reality of Victorian England—they are successful when they project arbitrary symbolic messages at the expense of their own identities. While an actor represents somebody else, a man with boards becomes irrelevant as a person when he promotes a



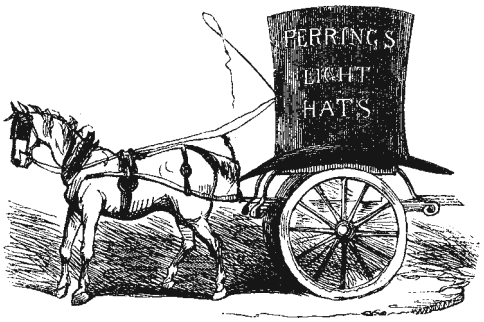
A CURIOUS WAY OF ADVERTISING A PLAY

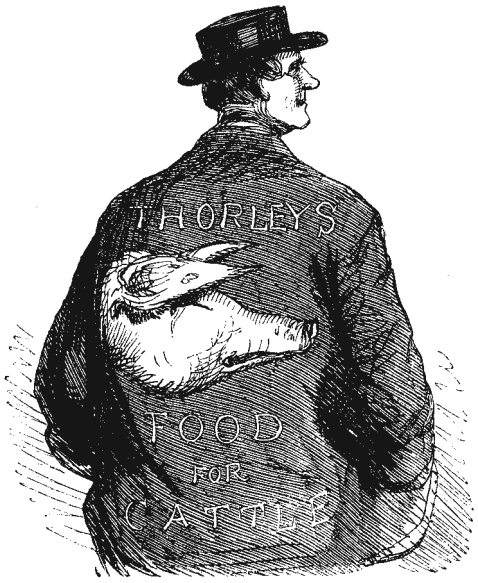
The characters of *An Actor's Romance* sandwiched among board men

Figure 4.15

commodity. In a way, they both create a sense of value or appeal that has nothing to do with who they are. A spectacle in which a trained actor makes his or her personality transparent in order to represent a fictional character is similar to the willingness of a desperate man to dismiss himself while foregrounding a commercial message. They become men without qualities of their own, symbolic scaffolds on which to hang a narrative or an image, and thus personify a site where a promotional message becomes perceivable.

The books by Smith and Sampson include many pictures and descriptions showing where to position an advertisement. Illustrations of the oldest techniques show ways of adding mobility to a graphic message—for example, when a cylindrical posting station





Figures 4.16a and 4.16b

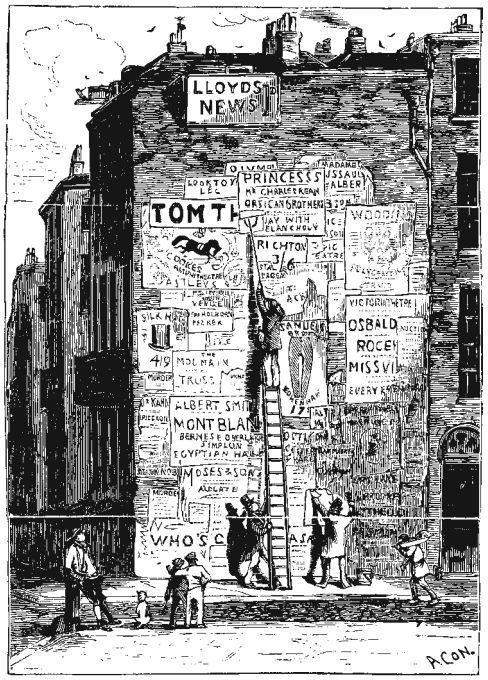
is mounted on a carriage, or poster boards are attached to a man on a horse. Smith discusses signage painted on the pavement and lifted above the crowd. More generally, however, advertisers looked for commercially potent symbolic vulnerabilities in lived reality. Like Barratt, they tried to identify which practices of material environments and daily life were most ready for an infusion of commercial symbolism. Figure 4.16a reveals an early representational experiment reaching beyond the commercial benefit of mobility.[51] A carriage was transformed into a huge traveling hat advertising a hat maker. The arbitrariness of the form of a carriage was acknowledged as open to interpretation and thus commercially potent. If functional requirements were unimportant and traffic regulations vague, the shape of an object traveling the streets of London could become the site of a commercial promotion. Moreover, this seven-foot-high figure literally resembled the commodity it advertised and made the association instantaneous.

Experiments involving common people signal the deepest transformation of daily practices, however. Hired sandwichmen presented only the earliest case of turning people into sites of commercial promotion.[52] Inevitably, the whole society was gradually absorbed into the process. Smith discusses how the economy of small businesses requires owners to look for a variety

of ways to promote their products or services. He discusses how and why people put commercial signs on their dogs, horses, or livestock. Then Smith immediately switches to placing signs on people and praises a Mr. Thorley, owner of Thorley's Food for Cattle, for the inventive jackets with painted depictions of livestock, worn by his ad distributors (Figure 4.16b). *Advertise. How? When? Where?* includes a picture of an ox covered with a promotional blanket side-by-side with the man wearing a jacket painted with a pig's head (Figure 4.16b). Smith then switches to women's dresses and elaborates on the ingenious use of an umbrella designed like a poster promoting crinolines. These symbolic practices signal a radical effort to open up and exploit the appearance of common people for commercial purposes. Only high culture in its practices of appearance and behavior preserved the impression of immunity to commercial forces. Those whose livelihood depended on their own labor gradually accepted that, in the capitalist society, their appearance was an integral part of the new economy of signs. The working class became a site for advertising.

In his *Business of Advertising*, published in 1905, Clarence Moran calls some of these older techniques of promotion "anomalous" and says that "advertising vans . . . are now prohibited in most towns. Sandwich-men are banished from the City of London."[53] Stationary posters persisted, however. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bill-Posters' Associations in London defended their right to advertise in all public places, arguing that commercial posters beautified the city: "The hoardings gave colour to the streets and formed the picture-gallery of 'the people.' Dismantled buildings and bare boards were rendered pleasing and attractive by the display of posters. Vacant lands within urban areas were turned from squalid wastes liable to be used for purposes dangerous to the peace and decency of the locality into a well-ordered enclosure."[54]

Moran discusses that issue and illustrates it with photographs. One of them, "An Irish Bill-Posting Station," has been colorized and is shown here as Plate 16.[55] It reveals a commercial potpourri of colors organized in random patterns. Even though the posters are stratified according to their sizes, that order is barely discernable. The intensity of colors and richness of the random relationships they establish may seem familiar today, but imagine such a graphically aggressive collage against the visually muted environment of a late-nineteenth-century town. At that time in England and Ireland, urban housing was relatively uniform, its design patterns and building materials repetitive. Such environments darkened by the accumulated soot created a perfect background for the visual intensity of



AN OLD BILL-POSTING STATION

Figure 4.17

fresh and vivid colors. A posting station like this one would immediately draw attention. But it seems that the designers of this temporary structure were concerned with more than just the contrast between the posters and the city. This huge board seems to hide an empty urban lot behind it. The sidewalk in front of it and a glimpse of the roof in the upper right corner reveal that this temporary structure was designed to continue the elevation of an adjacent building. It seems that if the photograph were longer it would have shown that the wall of posters lines up with the façade on the right. Still, while the board is similar in size and position to existing buildings, its graphic attributes have nothing to do with the traditional articulation of architecture. This peculiar constitution of an advertising site, a tendency to simultaneously follow common urban features and create a visual exception in the city, has been revealed by other and even older examples.

In 1874, Sampson (and Moran after him, in 1905) published an engraving showing an example from the time when posters were published only as black-and-white texts. That image, Figure 4.17 here, depicts a blank elevation-like wall from a four-story building covered with such posters.[56] This wall resembles adjacent façades more explicitly than that in Plate 16. Blank surfaces like this one are usually perpendicular to the sidewalk—they appear when a building is missing in a dense urban fabric and they disappear when a new structure fills the gap. This wall, however, is adjacent to the sidewalk and it is as tall and as visible as other regular elevations. It just happens to be blank. The arrangement of commercial messages posted on it is even more random than in Plate 16.

Sampson and Moran show a spectrum of such examples, and the Bill-Posters' Association identifies empty lots, dilapidated or abandoned buildings, and structures devoid of conventional articulation as sites of commercial beautification. They all focus on symbolic conditions resembling those of a sandwich-man: urban sites of advertising

lack a conventional articulation of their own. This absence of symbolic attributes makes them commercially accessible, and so promotional messages appropriate their symbolic transparency. Moran presents other black-and-white photographs of such practices. They include buildings as well as temporary or utilitarian structures, such as retaining walls or tall scaffoldings. While discussing the practices of his time, Smith wrote that "within the last two or three years, not a side of a house, railway-arch, or boarding in any public thoroughfare (even the chimneys have not escaped), but is covered with posters and bills of all descriptions."[57]

This search for structures without inherent symbolic attributes reveals a new way of thinking about urban space. It is a search for or an effort to establish the heterotopic conditions of the industrial era.[58] In the physical space of the city, people uncovered or constructed sites of advertising as environments that simultaneously represented, contested, and subverted conventions of the normative symbolic practices. Thus a sidewalk where a man hides his old clothes behind sandwich boards (and in this way acquires the commercial right to mingle with well-dressed members of higher society) becomes the place where conventions of appearance are in flux. The blank wall of a building reveals that designing architecture could be understood as consisting of two mutually exclusive phases, the technical that produces the material shell and the symbolic that assigns symbolic meanings to a building. Consequently, as Figure 4.17 shows, the physical surface of an architectural elevation could entirely dismiss a building's function and embrace the logic of commercial promotion. Utilitarian structures such as bridges, chimneys, roofs, or lampposts, when covered with posters, mark a site where the material reality of the city becomes a backdrop for arbitrary meanings.

Victorians did not limit these representational experiments to found conditions. They designed completely new kinds of complex heterotopias, and advertisers were the first to acknowledge their symbolic potency. Figure 4.18 shows a train station and the degree to which its visual space was filled with advertisements.[59] Generally speaking, the railway systems created a safe haven for commercial practices. Even when municipalities began restricting advertising, railway companies were frequently granted special exemptions.[60] Places designed for trains and the new kind of travelers constituted heterotopia par excellence—a combination of an unprecedented physical environment, a different way of viewing, and a siteless place supporting new kinds of symbolic interactions. Thus railroads and especially railway stations materialized the hybrid condition, both urban and industrial. In areas where they traversed open land, their design was simply driven by technical

Figure 4.18

considerations but the same principles guided the solutions of urban facilities. Then, as now, railway corridors cut through the most traditional urban fabrics, but the design of their tracks and auxiliary devices is the same as in more open rural areas. They are designed for maintenance efficiency; their choice of materials and finishes is universal and never responds to the particularities of a visual surrounding.

Interiors of large nineteenth-century railway stations show the same bias for the industrial logic.[61] The wide spans needed to accommodate trains and their smoke-producing locomotives prompted the use of light steel construction. Unheated and huge, these spaces created a condition that was neither inside nor outdoors. This transitional character worked well with the skeletal articulation of structures. Not only columns but also roof trusses remained exposed, and their frame-like appearance was heightened by the use of infill glass. As Figure 4.18 shows, the lower sections of these urban scaffolds were often filled with mural advertising.

Moreover, railroads facilitated new temporal and visual experiences that were especially suitable for advertising. The very practice of traveling for sightseeing reinterpreted the visual reality and created new kinds of destinations. Places of historical significance or natural beauty became tourist attractions. Masses of train passengers learned to view the world as a slowly unfolding linear diorama. A person sitting in a moving train carriage could treat the world like a long picture or a movie that cannot be physically entered. That picture/world was accessible only via stations. Tourists pay attention to

everything that is visually attractive, and advertisers sensed this state of heightened alertness. Thus, train compartments were covered with enameled plaques and railroad stations as well as the spaces in front of their main entrances were filled with boards of mural advertising.[62]

The relationships between traveling and advertising reached far beyond the practicalities of visual appeal, however. In *Advertise,* Smith mixes up suggestions concerning advertising and practices of traveling by train as if he had difficulty distinguishing between the two. He also asserts that "railway stations, at all times, are the '*Where to Advertise*'; for trains . . . bring *strangers* to this great metropolis."[63] It seems that advertisers targeted the condition of being suspended between destinations and the sense of estrangement. A train station became a place of heightened anonymity, a zone of first impressions. In a space full of strangers transitioning from one place to the next, people quickly interpreted and judged others by their appearance. The railroad "transmute[d] a man from a traveler into a living parcel."[64] Railways produced more than sites of advertising. As viewing devices and a new kind of entertainment apparatus, they revealed that the whole material world could be seen as a self-promoting commodity or backdrop for commercial messages.

Architecture and Commercial Disintegration of Thought

The culture of consumerism emerged gradually, in a slow process of reshaping relationships among people, things, and places. The mass production of goods powered the need for change. The viewing devices discussed here reshaped visuality and the identity of the observer. Advertisements revealed that people and lived environments may be perceived as devoid of inherent symbolic features and, just like commodities, could be infused with arbitrary narratives. Museums transformed historical artifacts into vessels of proper meanings. Department stores transformed mass-produced items into objects of desire. Trains transformed landscapes, cities, and people living in them into objects of voyeurism. All these developments enhanced the commercial disintegration of thought—they increased the mutability of concepts and meanings that structure life. Yet, those who understood that any ideal system of symbolic order is obsolete, those who subconsciously accepted that they were living life grounded in contradictions and conflicts—as well as those who merely viewed themselves as ductile elements of the new economy—needed a new skill. They all had to learn how to establish a sense of order that, without stifling the progress of capitalism, would provide them with the mental comfort of control over these

radical changes. That new order, or rather an impression of it, must have maintained but simultaneously counterbalanced the commercial disintegration of thought. The practices of denial in the relationships between commercial experimentation and proper discourses published in the *ILN* belong to this category but they only helped to accept the inevitability of disorder. People needed clear examples of how to organize the commercially fragmented world. Victorian England elevated such attempts to the rank of political events but also built them into the most private aspects of habitation. Architecture played a key role in these processes.

The Exhibition of the World's Industry of 1851 provides a crowning example of such an effort. It was designed to represent the whole contemporary world under one roof. Visitors were meant to see the technological achievements (and thus the superiority) of Great Britain vis-à-vis those of the rest of the world. An attractive tourist destination and an educational tool, its format followed earlier patterns of agricultural shows. But it also imported spatial and material solutions from seemingly unrelated models such as train stations, conservatories, and museums. As a political and cultural event, it encapsulated the drive to reshape reality and the ideas that emerged during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially between 1837 and 1851, when England underwent an intense period of experimentation focused on developing new structures of social control, meaning production, modern patterns of normative behavior, and public space.[65] The Great Exhibition of 1851 was designed to work as another didactic machine; it trained members of the working class how to behave in new kinds of public places, provided the middle class with a spectrum of commodities to signify their social status, enhanced British national identity as emblematic of their technological superiority, and generally helped to build consumerism into the new model of socioeconomic relationships.

The Crystal Palace was designed by Joseph Paxton to facilitate thousands of visitors but also to uniquely structure their interactions with exhibited objects. Figure 4.19, published in the *ILN* on October 4, 1851, shows that the building was impressive by any measure. In order to accommodate 14,000 exhibitors and more than 100,000 objects, the structure provided approximately 990,000 square feet (92,000 square meters) of floor area, and more than 8 miles (13 km) of display tables. The exhibition included industrial products, crafts, samples of natural resources, as well as pieces of art such as paintings and sculpture. To bring the whole world under one roof, not only material products but also people were put on display. For example, the exhibition included a sample of a traditionally dressed Chinese family and a booth where a Tunisian merchant was surrounded by traditional goods. Up

to ninety thousand visitors passed through the Crystal Palace on a busy day, with a total of about six million seeing the exhibition (the equivalent of one-fifth of the population of Great Britain at the time).[66] The building's physical solution was as inventive as its program. It was the first prefabricated public edifice of that scale. The primary structure was entirely made of standardized steel elements assembled on site. Glass used for infill created a transparent envelope. The building's layout was fully modular and its form repetitive. Like a train station, the Crystal Palace accommodated the flow of and provided good orientation for thousands of visitors. Long vistas helped people to position themselves in that otherwise repetitive space. At the same time, its semi-industrial logic revealed that the building could explicitly create conditions similar to those that mural advertisers sought in the city. The uniformity of that environment created a perfect backdrop for the commercial promotion of exhibited objects. They were hung, put on pedestals, or "artistically arranged" on temporary walls or tables.

In addition, like an exhibition hall showing cultural or natural history, the Great Exhibition explored the possibility of seeing the overarching order of manufactured things—and thus the emerging structure of the industrialized world. The complexity of other countries' lived-in reality was reduced to qualities supposedly embodied by material artifacts, those that could be physically transported to a different location and exhibited, all presented for visual inspection with the implication that their meanings were accessible to those willing to learn or engage in aesthetic contemplation.

Figure 4.19 shows that the building provided totalizing views, ways of perceiving principles organizing all the objects and their grouping. This kind of experience was characteristic of nineteenth-century museums, which gave spatial form to such epistemological concepts as the evolution of species or stylistic periodization in art.[67] In the exhibition of 1851, artifacts were primarily organized by the country of origin. Prince Albert conceived of an additional classification, dividing products into a complex system under four primary categories: Raw Materials, Machinery and Mechanical Inventions, Manufacturers, and Sculpture and Plastic Arts. Only Great Britain, with its dominating presence, fulfilled all of them. These verbal ways of structuring one's understanding of the exhibition were disseminated in booklets, which as Figure 4.21 shows, many visitors read while in the Crystal Palace.

The exhibition's space of representation moved beyond the museum model, however. It forcefully tested the tension between two conflicting ways of thinking—one triggered by the totality of taxonomic or scientific orders, and the other implied by the multiplicity

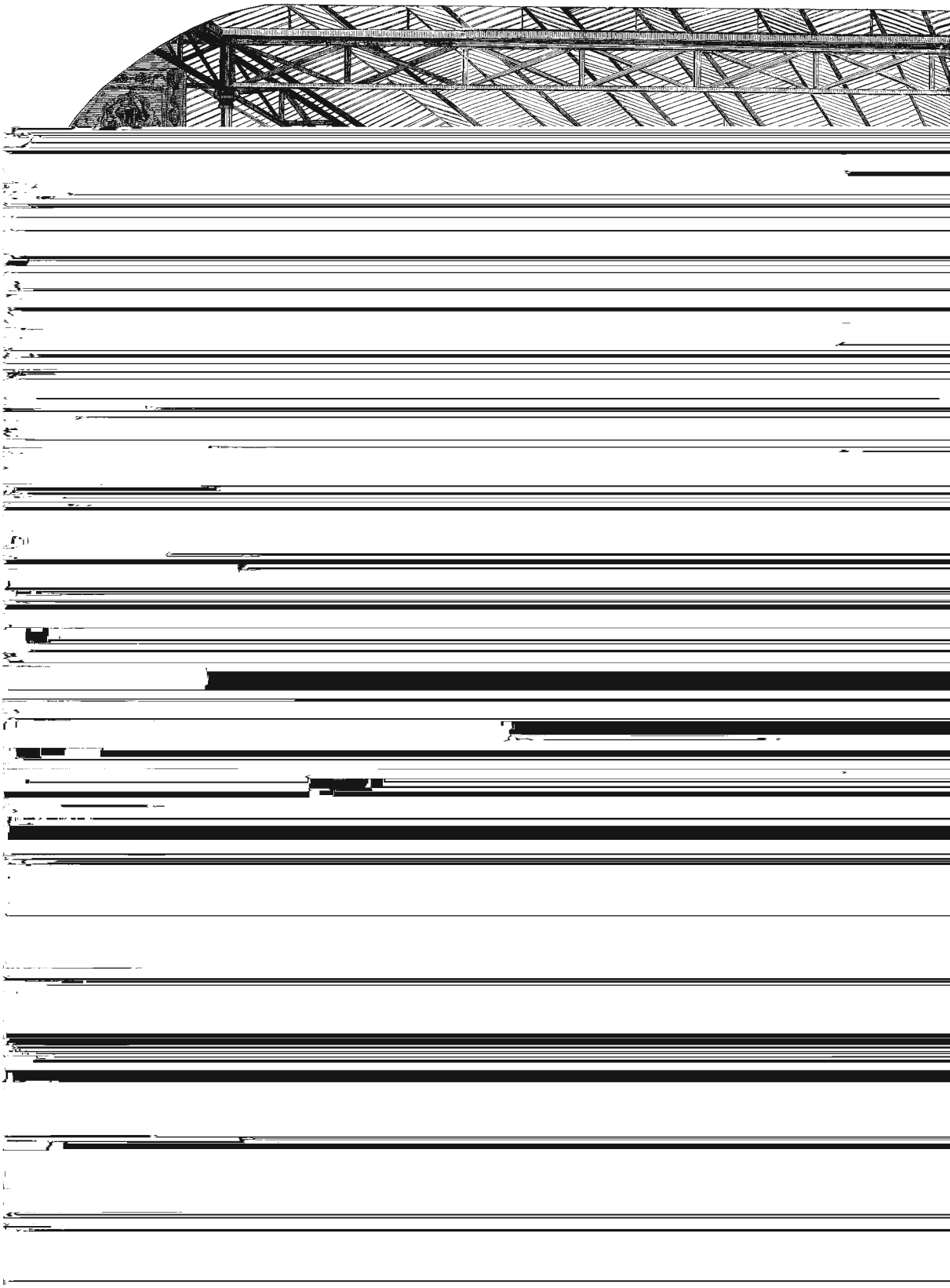
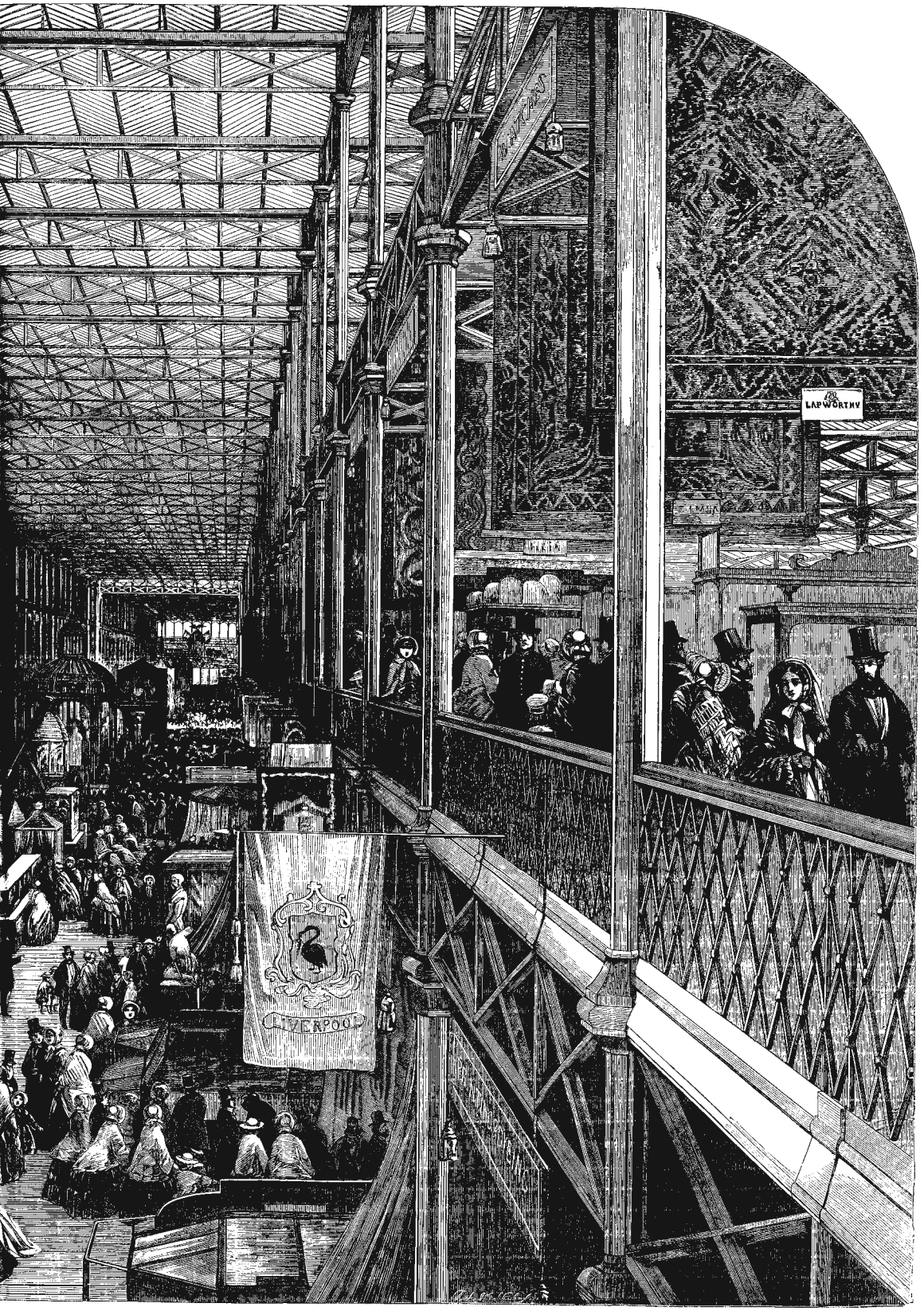


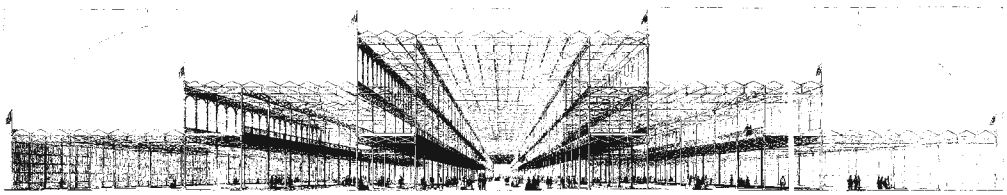
Figure 4.19

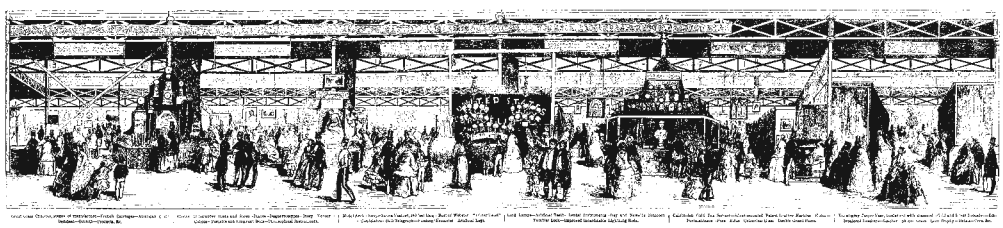


AVENUE, LOOKING EAST.

of experiences and the arbitrary selection of presented commodities. Figure 4.20a was published in the *ILN* on March 8, 1851. It shows the Crystal Palace when the structure was completed but before it was populated with the exhibition artifacts. This transparent skeleton of an empty building fascinated people. Many visited the site and, in a fragment of the building temporarily converted into a lecture hall, some listened to experts like Professor Cowper, who explained the structure.[68] The frame was huge, but unlike traditional buildings it remained transparent. Temporary scaffoldings were not needed during construction because the building was the scaffolding. The weight of building elements, limited to those that could be lifted by horses and systems of pulleys, produced an unusually light frame, the quality permanently revealed by the application of transparent glass for the envelope. In a traditional masonry building, perception is always bounded by opaque surfaces surrounding a person and thus the understanding of the whole structure can only be modeled in one's mind, but in the Crystal Palace one could literally see the whole steel skeleton in a single view. The sensation of perceiving such a multiplicity of organized elements was probably as radically new as when people viewed and navigated through wire-frame models on a computer screen for the first time. Figure 4.19 shows that even after the exhibition was installed, the rational transparency of the building's form was still perceivable. This visible logic of the frame represented the totalizing order.

Figure 4.20b, on the other hand, shows the other mode of perception and thinking. The picture was published in a supplemental issue of the *ILN* on November 22, 1851. The image shows a fragment of the so-called Grand Panorama of the Great Exhibition, an almost eighty-foot-long figurative depiction of "every object . . . in the precise order in which [it] stood."[69] After the exhibition closed, pages of this panorama were gradually printed and sold as a visual record of the actual complexity of the show. Pictures of individual booths are relatively small, each of them occupying approximately three to four inches. Eighty feet of such a linear composition seems almost impossible to absorb and remember in an orderly manner, and this is exactly the point of the representational experiment. Viewing these sheets resembles the visual experience visitors had in the building; that is, the panorama recreates the state of sensory overload and confusion. The official *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace* refers to this phenomenon in terms of didactic intensity, when the "education of eye and mind was going on at a thousand points at the same moment directly and indirectly—formally and informally—by example, suggestion, and illustration."[70] A Mr. Maloney explained his experience more simply:





Figures 4.20a and 4.20b

With conscious pride
I stud inside
And looked the World's Great Fair in,
Until me sight
Was dazzled quite,
And couldn't see for staring.[71]

Undoubtedly, such a multiplicity of different and spectacular things in one interior was unprecedented and overwhelming. According to Richards, the environment produced an "almost hallucinatory experience."[72] This was not a structured educational effort. Rather, it was a practice of commercial enchantment, an attempt to dazzle a visitor to the point when appreciation for what one perceives is no longer bound by any preconceived logic of understanding or judgment. It is another kind of establishing ductility in symbolic thoughts: a fetishistic practice that simultaneously concentrates and confuses interest to produce irrational reverence.

The Grand Panorama could be compared to a page filled with printed advertisements in the *ILN*, like Figure 4.4a, or to a billboard with commercial posters, like that in Plate 16 and Figures 4.17 and/or 4.18. They all attracted attention and simultaneously forced one to indiscriminately sample multiple visual forms. There is a profound difference, however,

between the Crystal Palace and these other examples. Looking at the tapestry of printed advertisements, regardless how many of them, was not meant to produce a sense of or even the need for a new, higher order of things. The graphic layouts were primarily designed to facilitate a play of attractions. The Crystal Palace, on the other hand, presented the reconciliation of a well-formed knowledge or value system and the freedom of commercial choice. Visitors were supposed to leave with an impression that the exhibition provides a kaleidoscopic synthesis—the totalizing or systematic order in agreement with the most arbitrary commercial choices or interpretations. To some degree, that impression was created by the combination of sensory overload and explanations printed in guides. More importantly, however, it was implied by efforts to spatially negotiate the general and idiosyncratic orders of the exhibition.

While the building form and the taxonomy of the exhibition represented cohesive concepts of order, the artifacts on display did not subscribe to any common rule. Other than the space limitation or the four categories, no general requirement was imposed on invited exhibitors. At the same time, the building's structure had an imposing presence in all parts of the exhibition. Even when the ground floor was crowded with people and objects, the transparent roof and the modular layout of columns revealed the rational transparency of Paxton's design. One could always see enough of the skeleton to sense its totalizing power. The frame implied spatial hierarchy, from big to small, and from primary to secondary and tertiary. The negotiation of these two different ways of thinking was primarily done by the arrangements of things on display.

Figures 4.19 and 4.20b show that all products were arranged in similar groupings. Figure 4.21, an illustration published in the *ILN* in July, 1851, shows a closer view of one of the booths. As if following an unspoken agreement, all exhibitors made formal arrangements. Most frequently these spatial compositions constituted something of a promotional pyramid or an altar establishing a local center of interest. Figure 4.20b shows that those shrines of display are centered on the building's columns and thus follow the overarching rational order of the building. Objects in Figure 4.21 retain their individuality, though: each artifact occupies its own space, while some are placed on platforms, stands, or a common base. Because these artifacts are placed in physical proximity, they interact; their positions, sizes, and figurative characteristics create a degree of relationships. For example, they line up vertically, like pieces in the center of Figure 4.21, or they loosely establish balance, hierarchy, or imply a visual center. A person may perceive these emerging relationships but just as easily may see all the pieces as unrelated. Artifacts on display are simultaneously interconnected and

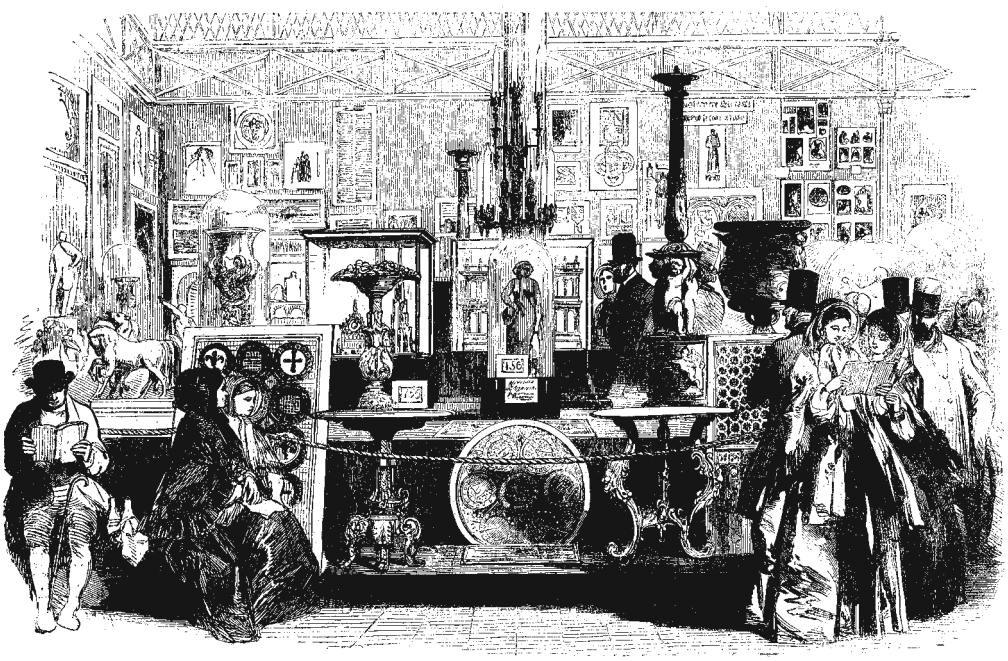


Figure 4.21

singled out. In this way, the designers of the display erased the uncomfortable discontinuity between the determined and arbitrary realms of decisions. This was a definite departure from the classical era and its rigid integrity of holistic orders. But it also was not the indiscriminate logic of pure commercial promotion exemplified by pages of advertisements such as that in Figure 4.4a. The promotional shrines of the Great Exhibition implied how to establish a flexible sense of order in the fragmented world of commodities. Arrangements like that in Figure 4.21 provided material manifestations of a dynamic way of thinking in which rational thoughts were always balanced by a measured degree of confusion.

These phenomena of the Great Exhibition seem elemental, but they are rarely acknowledged in scholarly studies. The most common symbolic practices of that time also remain insufficiently explored. Victorian interiors, perhaps the most recognizable feature of that era, are frequently glossed over by those who merely describe them. Nevertheless, they played a key role in shaping the new culture of consumerism and disseminating its emergent modality of thought. At the very center of discourses behind these practices was a characteristically Victorian concept of so-called good taste. Although seemingly grounded in the Kantian concept of universal judgment, it operated in ways quite different from those of

aesthetic disinterest and detachment. Taste belonged to the category of proper subjects of discussion, like those identified by the *ILN*, and was mass-produced and disseminated by design guides, such as Charles L. Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details*, popular art journals like *The Art Journal*, *The Magazine of Art*, and *The Studio*, and ladies' magazines, such as *The Lady* and *The Queen*. Like other symbolic constructions of that time, good taste was always presented as a concept that was simultaneously stable and in flux—a matter of asserting an authoritative judgment but also an expression of one's ability to follow the moving target of ever-changing fashion.

Although practices of interior decoration signified the high culture of the Victorian era, they actually reveal how representational experimentation like that of the Great Exhibition was brought to private houses and apartments. Consider an example: Figure 4.22 shows the Drawing Room at Haymount, photographed in 1890 by H. Bedford Lemere.[73] Nicholas Cooper calls it "a classic case of late Victorian clutter."[74] Indeed, Victorian interior design is synonymous with the exuberant accumulation of physical objects and visual patterns. The room seems so overcrowded, it might have been difficult to move around in it. Just looking at the picture of the space may trigger a claustrophobic reaction. The field of vision is saturated with different figures and elements of varied scale, materiality, and function. No fragment of the picture is left visually empty. If not for the material goods in the background, there is always some printed or carved pattern that fills any visual gap. In this respect, Figure 4.22 is similar to the lower part of Figure 4.21, an exhibition booth in the Crystal Palace. In the exhibition, however, each cluttered display was framed by the explicitly rational and lucid structure of the building. Actually, so is the Drawing Room at Haymount.

The physical shell of the room is not an indifferent or secondary container holding a collection of things. It establishes its own ordering logic. Figure 4.23a graphically extracts from Figure 4.22 those elements designed to articulate the overarching logic, in this case the lines that visually structure the walls and the ceiling. Some of them are directly visible in the photograph, others are only implied. Pieces of furniture hide some of them, and the big mirror shows those that were behind the camera when Lemere took the picture. Although only a fragment of the room is visible, the view is sufficient to extrapolate that two sets of parallel lines create a big figure similar to a tic-tac-toe grid, dividing the ceiling into nine segments. Like the transparent roof in the Crystal Palace, the ceiling grid is discernable because it is entirely visible. Walls follow this pattern and are divided horizontally and vertically, primarily into a set of three horizontal zones. The first one is created by a

Figure 4.22

so-called dado or wainscot, a paneling delimited by a small frieze and an almost entirely hidden baseboard at the bottom, both shown in Figure 4.23a. The second zone is an elaborate frieze at the top of each wall. The third zone, the space between the other two, is additionally divided by a horizontal line, which marks a change in the pattern of wallpaper. As if to counterbalance the strengths of this horizontal order, the walls are also divided vertically. The projected volume of the fireplace, in Figure 4.23a indicated by the gray rectangle on the right, creates such a division. The big mirror on the left, which must have been treated like built-in furniture, plays a similar role. It is shown as the second gray rectangle in Figure 4.23a. The position and size of these vertical figures are analogous to and coincide with the middle section of the ceiling grid. If not for the furniture and visual noise created by the wallpaper, one could easily see how explicitly rational this order is. While a person standing in the Crystal Palace was enclosed by a visually permeable building frame, in this room one is surrounded by an even more abstracted cage of orthographic geometry.

Figures 4.23a, 4.23b, and 4.23c

Figure 4.23b illustrates another similarity between the Drawing Room at Haymount and the Great Exhibition of 1851. The artifacts on display in the exhibition were positioned in such a way that each maintained a degree of separateness, occupying its own visual or three-dimensional space. The same curatorial attitude can be observed in Figure 4.22. Elements of the drawing room interior are perceptually objectified and arranged, as in an exhibition. Some objects, those indicated by lighter tones of gray in Figure 4.23b, are attached to walls. The mid-gray figures refer to free-standing artifacts composed against walls. All of them are carefully spaced, with important surfaces facing the center of the room; they deliberately fill the field of vision. The frame of the big mirror, the only blank element in Figure 4.23b, is actually cluttered with objects the mirror reflects. Explicitly free-standing pieces, those indicated by dark gray and black colors in Figure 4.23b, follow the same logic. Sometimes singular objects, like the armchair on the left, sometimes multiple elements creating a discernible group, they are always arranged to be seen from various sides. The distance between such pieces is relatively constant, just enough for a person to move around them. As in the Great Exhibition, this space accumulates artifacts, decreases their physical proximity, and simultaneously objectifies them like commodities on display in a store window.

Moreover, the Drawing Room at Haymount fosters the same kind of symbolic interactions between a viewer and a display identified in the Crystal Palace. Figure 4.23c shows four examples of how the interior encourages a person to participate in reading and constructing relationships among these objects, perceiving them as different but, to a certain degree, formally interconnected. Consider a group organized by a small table in the picture's foreground. The table's oval shape and curved legs follow one primary rule of composition—the vertical axis of symmetry. Many artifacts are placed on the tabletop and its lower shelf. They vary; they have not been selected to explicitly conform to any hierarchy of sizes or similarity of shapes. Despite their individual character and orientation, the whole composition implies a possibility of thinking that the table's vertical line of symmetry applies to the whole grouping. That compositional logic is most discernable in the case of two plants shown in Figure 4.23c, one at the center of the tabletop and the other on the shelf below. Numerous local arrangements can be discerned in the room.

A visitor to the drawing room is repeatedly trained in noticing possible orders in the collected commodities. The fireplace may serve as an example of another ordering tactic, that of framing. Victorian England seemed to have been obsessed with drawing a boundary around something to separate it from its surroundings, reveal its importance, or collect otherwise independent pieces into a whole. Framed pictures, painted or printed, exemplify the most literal and common version of this practice, and the drawing room includes many of them. Figure 4.23c shows that the fireplace reveals a more nuanced act of framing. At the top, the dark mirror creates a visual container, and the oval plate with its optical reflection are positioned within it. At the bottom, the open hearth frames space for a floral arrangement. The tabletop and the big mirror serve as framing devices too. Like the dark mirror of the fireplace, they operate spatially by ordering both material and reflected objects. The big mirror visually encloses the white sculpture and its optical double. Figure 4.22, better than the small image in Figure 4.23c, shows that the surface of the tabletop in the foreground is smooth and reflects all objects on it, creating a three-dimensional symmetrical composition. The tabletop frames it. If, in any of these cases, the reflective surfaces were replaced by nonreflective materials, the phenomenon of the spatial framing of independent objects would be weakened or disappear.

Some of these implied orders in the drawing room are designed to reach across the whole interior. The big mirror, for example, reflects not only the white sculpture but also any object in the room. Figure 4.23c shows how one could see that the sculpture, the gasolier in the room center, their reflections, and the mirror's center, are aligned. Together, they imply a possibility of thinking about a vertical plane cutting across the room's center. Such an

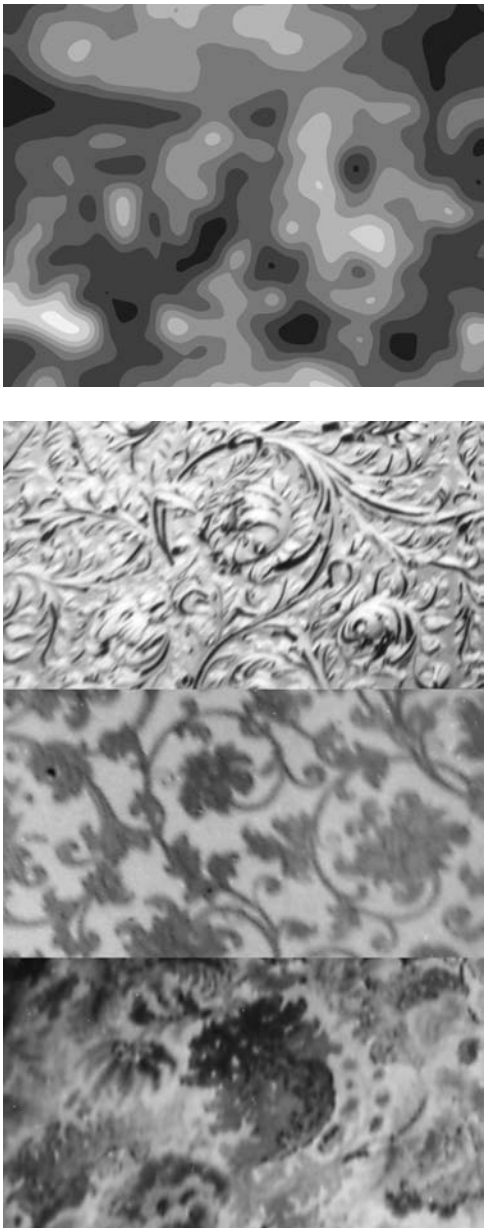
invisible plane collects objects positioned on it and assigns a degree of formal importance to them. One could also think about a similar vertical plane generated by the dark mirror and the strongly articulated spatial symmetry of the fireplace. The two planes would intersect in the center of the room grid, where the gasolier hangs from the center of the ceiling grid. Thus, to a degree, the room grid is brought into the play of ordering and it operates like a super-frame. These implied ordering devices suggest a hierarchy, e.g., the gasolier in the room center in the primary position, the figures of the fireplace and big mirror in secondary, the white sculpture, oval plate, and symmetrical decorations of the fireplace decoration being tertiary elements. Such a formal hierarchy absorbs arbitrary and local orders and thus provides a mental comfort of control over the environment saturated with commercial instabilities and conflicts.

One could think of the Drawing Room at Haymount as a spatial kaleidoscope. It collects random objects and creates formal patterns of relationships among them. This similarity is obvious when an interior designer uses optical reflection to order things, but all implied planes or vertical axes of symmetry are essentially a three-dimensional version of kaleidoscopic operations. Unlike a kaleidoscope, which might be turned endlessly and could produce an infinite number of orders, the room is physically static. In time, even the most ingenious arrangement of things in an interior may become too familiar and lose its evocative power. To deal with this problem, the drawing room imports another technique from the Crystal Palace.

Like the Great Exhibition of 1851, this interior is designed to create a measured degree of visual confusion. What the exhibition produced by its sheer size and physical complexity was recreated here in a much smaller scale. In order to prevent the process of interpretation from stabilizing in one's mind, this environment uses an extensive complexity of visual patterns. Figures 4.24a and 4.24b show two aspects of this perceptual operation. The first one highlights how the composition of light and the optical properties of the pieces in the room create a visual pattern. The image is intentionally defocused to eliminate details. It shows how the distribution of all these pieces has been deliberate in the way the field of vision consists of patches of light and shadow that are similar in size and positioned to create a complex and balanced pattern. Sometimes this equilibrium is achieved by juxtaposing elements of high contrast, such as those in and around the fireplace, but in other parts the same effect is achieved with more muted distinctions. One could argue that visual balance is the function of this particular photograph—that Lemere created this composition. Yes, but the room was designed for a particular way of viewing, and it is safe to assume that

the picture was approved by the owner or designer as properly representing the interior. After all, it has been saved in the permanent collection of the National Monuments Record, an official public archive of English Heritage. This complex balance resulted as much from the position of the camera as it reflects a careful arrangement of physical elements and light. For example, imagine how strong a bright spot would appear if one took away or even moved the armchair in the lower left corner of the picture. It stands in shadow because its dark silhouette breaks up a large and continuous spot of light on the floor. In other cases, such as the hearth rug in front of the fireplace or the pieces of furniture placed against the wall near the right edge of the picture, dark colors of objects create a perceptual counterpoint of contrasting qualities. This way of thinking can be deciphered in many places and at all scales of the interior.

The three smaller images in Figure 4.24b each show a sample of a graphic pattern used to decorate the room: the one at the top shows the ceiling, the middle one the wallpaper, and the bottom the carpet. Visually they are not that different. It is even more telling that they resemble the overall field of vision created by the interior (Figure 4.24a). It is this optical resonance—the play of similarities to the point of confusion—that keeps the interpretive thought in



Figures 4.24a and 4.24b

motion. This is a condensed version of what the Great Exhibition achieved by exposing visitors to an exhausting quantity of commodities. By simultaneously proposing ways of ordering independent artifacts and preventing such orders from becoming formulaic, this room facilitates another kind of ductility in symbolic thought. The interior implies that the world of material objects is as much organized by physical attributes as it is by individual acts of perception and interpretation. It structures attention in such a way that any order of physical things is always open to negotiation.

The material and spatial practices discussed reveal that the whole Victorian world facilitated representational experimentation. Architecture tested these new ways of thinking against a broad array of spatial conditions and human interactions. Architects not only showed that it is possible to construct commercial models of the grandest vision of world order, like the Great Exhibition of 1851, but they also supported the gradual transition of such commercial experimentation into the daily routines of life. The most important aspect of this transference concerned the way people participated in these experiments. The Crystal Palace operated like a printed advertisement; it was a one-time spatial event designed by professionals and it only implied that visitors should make a unique mental effort to interpret possible relationships. Everybody who was constructing his or her domestic space in a manner similar to that of the Drawing Room at Haymount actively exercised new patterns of symbolic ordering.

Designing architecture differed from constructing commercial messages in one essential way, however. While promotional activities could have been included in the category of new inventions, architectural ideas were inseparable from the legacy of theoretical writings. It was possible to deny any cultural value in a commercial image or assume a dichotomy between practices of high culture and visual production driven by greed, but it was much more difficult to dismiss symbolic value in architecture. Models of high culture required that architecture be positioned within historically grounded discourses. At the time when people were trained to overlook the conflicted character of assumptions behind common practices of capitalism, theoreticians of architecture and art had to face the shift in symbolic thinking.[75]

John Ruskin and his influential *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* provide an example of how mid-Victorian England identified and dealt with that challenge. To paraphrase Baudelaire, the book may be compared to a kaleidoscope gifted with moral awareness. It reveals a familiar chasm between lofty principles and the loosely organized collection of observations and empirical facts.[76] The seven lamps announce seven principles that supposedly should

guide an architect. Analogous to the relationship between the superstructure of the Crystal Palace and the collection of commodities in it, the seven chapters and a tedious numbering of subchapters obscure the fact that frequently Ruskin's text amounts merely to a digressive stream of thought. Morally charged assertions, especially their righteous attitude, hold the argument together. Like other evangelicals of the time, he frequently grounds his ideas in the religious aspects of architecture. However, the fragmented and conflicted character of his writing helps make explicit those symbolic issues that most Victorians dealt with only on a subconscious level.

A significant focus in Ruskin's work is the role emotions play in beauty and art. Specifically, he focuses on the function of disordering and subjective elements in his aesthetic system by studying the relationship between the beautiful and the sublime.[77] Initially, he tried to reconcile the two.[78] Morally charged concepts of the beautiful could not agree, however, with "the pleasures of strong, even violent emotion, of asymmetry, of the awesome, the terrible, and the vast" manifesting the sublime.[79] In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture,* beauty in architecture is associated with God's order, which buildings should replicate. Thus, for example, the fluting of the column is beautiful because it resembles the bark of the tree; the form of fluting is a distilled replica of God's creation. Ruskin asserts that "man cannot advance in the invention of beauty, without directly imitating natural [created by God] forms."[80] To do this, designers should recreate figures existing in nature, but they may also refer to abstract ideas, such as hierarchy, also associated with God's order. The material world we live in is not perfect, however; its ideal order coexists with random elements like the time-related essential sublimity embodied in "rocks, mountains, clouds, or waves."[81]

Ruskin introduces these concepts of the picturesque and the sublime in "The Lamp of Memory" chapter, where he discusses architecture as a symbolic construct capable of shaping ideas of national or cultural identity. There, unlike in "The Lamp of Beauty," he focuses on the historical dimension of buildings and specifically analyzes their memorial or monumental function.[82] Thus he associates beauty with the relationship between buildings and the divine order embodied by nature, and he talks about the picturesque and sublime by theorizing how buildings should relate to other buildings. In this way, he associates the idiosyncratic and subjective attributes of architecture with human creation and proposes that the memory of already-constructed material symbols should be the foundation of establishing a sense of the English style.[83] Unlike the divine order of things, which simply exists, the national character of architecture must be designed. These two symbolic systems are different but may coexist; human ideas may be added to the realm of divine symbolism

because the picturesque is a "Parasitical Sublimity."[84] Just as certain organisms live in, with, or on another organism, so too may architecture (and generally art) embody two orders, one reflecting the ideal model of creation and the other manifesting elements of randomness and arbitrary patterns. While references to the divine order produce harmony and an integrity of architecture, constructed sublimity resonates with human emotions. And Ruskin exemplifies how painters, sculptors, and architects intentionally engrafted these compositional features to trigger feelings or direct thoughts. He also identifies general characteristics productive of such sublimity: "angular and broken lines, vigorous oppositions of light and shadow, and grave, deep, or boldly contrasted colour," all reminiscent of the essential sublimity.[85] This list of graphic attributes could easily apply to Figures 4.24a and 4.24b. If considered as describing a mode of perception and thinking, Ruskin's statement refers to intense visual stimulation devoid of apparent overarching order. This way of charging the visual field while carefully preventing the crystallization of a holistic structure clearly reminds one of many Victorian symbolic practices discussed earlier in this chapter. The *ILN* advertising page and the scrapbook approaches exemplified by Figures 4.4a and 4.4b belong in this category. Muybridge's photograph of pre-industrial Guatemala (Figure 4.13a) does it by carefully staging a fragmentation of the real view. Pictures and descriptions of the Great Exhibition of 1851 interior show how the accumulation of physical commodities dazzled the senses and made it impossible to remember and understand all objects. These kinds of unstable phenomena of perception would be unsustainable in themselves, however. Ruskin's concept of Parasitical Sublimity argues for the complementary relationship between omnipresent divine order and the disordering and subjective elements in lived and constructed reality—and thus his writing reveals another instance of those practices that seemingly reconciled conflicted ways of thinking.

The notion of a parasitical relationship between the sublime and the beautiful was Ruskin's primary contribution to theories of symbolic thought. Although both concepts, the beautiful and the sublime, were much older, it was in mid-nineteenth-century England that one could think about them in terms of a parasite and a body proper.[86] As Ruskin puts it, Parasitical Sublimity "depend[s] on the accidents, or on the least essential characters, of the objects to which it belongs."[87] The identification of this realm of attributes, which are easy to dismiss as merely practical or subjective, facilitated symbolic experimentation in Victorian England. They could be confusing or inconsistent while, seemingly, the system proper remained undisturbed. Whether on the pages of an illustrated periodical, in the appearance of a destitute person, within the awesome environment of the Great Exhibition, or in a cluttered private room, these subliminal attributes were the most malleable and open

to manipulation. They belonged to the new technology of thought because it was easy to emotionally charge them and, at the same time, keep the understanding of their symbolic functioning below or on the threshold of consciousness.

Architectural style is another theoretical issue that gained unprecedented significance in nineteenth-century England. J. Mordaunt Crook says it was "the central problem of Victorian architecture."[88] Ruskin discusses it in terms of the national style, a set of attributes that identify and encapsulate English cultural heritage. In his view, although architecture as a mnemonic device is capable of embodying and preserving signs of the glorious past, architects need to make an effort to shape and refine the sense of national identity.[89] While he outlines the need for it in the "Lamp of Memory," he elaborates on its desired functioning in the chapter devoted to obedience: the national style should be constructed like language, so it can be taught, internalized, and reproduced like rules of grammar and vocabulary. The degree to which the style is invented or borrowed is less important than the way it facilitates control over conceptualization and the understanding of symbolically correct architecture. In Ruskin's words, the national style is well established when "no individual caprice dispense[s] with, or materially vary[s], accepted types and customary decorations," and "every member and feature of [such architecture is] as commonly current, as frankly accepted, as [that nation's] language or its coin."[90] Then, to suggest his practical formula for the national style, he argues for a combination of features imported from the history of Romanesque and Gothic architecture, with priority given to the legacy of English Decorated.[91]

His concerns, assumptions, and preferences reflect the time when Gothic Revival dominated architectural production. A few years after *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* was published, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, another religious-minded theoretician of architecture, designed the so-called Gothic Hall in the Crystal Palace, an extensive display of building decorations and furniture exemplifying stylistic correctness. However, given the array of diverse industrial commodities, Pugin's choice of Gothic as the proper historical model must have appeared highly arbitrary and might have contributed to a new tendency to increase a spectrum of stylistic choices. In 1854, when the enlarged Crystal Palace was reconstructed in Sydenham, the most important part of that exhibition consisted of an array of period courts: Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Alhambra, Byzantine, Romanesque, Medieval, Renaissance, Pompeian, and Chinese.[92]

The world of mid-Victorian England was far too dynamic to accept Pugin's aesthetic puritanism or Ruskin's didactic formula for the national style. The architecture of British capitalism had to be much more liberal and open to changes. And, as Crook argues, because it balanced concerns about the past and the future, so-called progressive eclecticism

gained popularity in the years following the Great Exhibition.[93] Specifically, Alexander James Beresford Hope promoted this concept by shifting attention away from the exclusive character of historically and morally correct style and toward greater possibilities in diverse stylistic references. In a lecture given in 1858, Beresford Hope asserted: "There is . . . no such thing as a stationary school of Gothic—every school must be eclectic" and "to be truly eclectic, we must be universally eclectic—we must eclect from everything that has been collected; and we must assimilate and fuse everything that we eclect."[94] While still referring to different kinds of Gothic styles, his attitude signaled a significant shift in the concept of the national style. Where Ruskin debated the appropriateness of particular stylistic choices, Beresford Hope argued for indiscriminate inclusivity—that architects should draw from the legacy of all other nations and all phases of Gothic. It was no longer a matter of patriotically, morally, or religiously correct principles that were to guide a design thought. Buildings were to operate like kaleidoscopes. The knowledge of architectural history combined with the sensitivity of a tourist provided a selection of stylistic motives and impressions that were to be collected, arranged, and synthesized. Each façade or interior could appropriate cultural or historical references and construct new meaning out of these preexisting pieces and patterns of symbolism. When the key theoretical question was reduced to what each designer should "eclect," the issue of architectural style became aligned with the logic of commercial choice.

A foreigner fascinated by British cultural phenomena displayed perhaps the best understanding of artistic and architectural style in capitalism's formative period. Gottfried Semper, born in Hamburg, studied in Germany but completed his architectural education in Paris. He arrived in London for the first time when the Crystal Palace was under construction. Unlike Ruskin, who struggled with the dynamic and conflicted character of changes brought by the industrial and commercial revolution, Semper embraced them as implicitly progressive. In his view, the issue of style was emblematic of the new era, essential to conceptualizing new and interpreting existing architecture. Not long after he had designed some displays at the Great Exhibition of 1851, he discussed style as a central topic in his theory of taste.[95] In the three weeks following the close of the Crystal Palace, Semper wrote the first three chapters of *Science, Industry, and Art,* in which he suggests that "style means giving emphasis and artistic significance to the basic idea and to all intrinsic and extrinsic coefficients that modify the embodiment of the theme in a work of art."[96]

Assigning such importance to theming marks another significant departure from the dogmatic attitude of religiously grounded theories. Gothic Revival represented the aspirations of those who wanted to correctly reproduce that historical architecture and its

meanings. Theming a composition, on the other hand, involves highlighting an arbitrary topic within the narrative justifying a design work. A theme works like conceptual glue—it may be assigned to various parts or aspects of a building and thus replaces the need for holistic conceptual reasoning. Gothic Revival intended to resurrect those superior ideas that historical buildings represented and shared. A theme neither constitutes nor aspires to an ideal symbolic system. Rather, it establishes an order that gives priority to individual choice over compositional integrity, an order that is more inclusive than a stylistic formula. To address patterns of nonarbitrary consistencies and similarities among historical buildings, he considers the possibility of transcendental motives that may underlie design reasoning across time and cultural divisions.[97] In addition to individual choice, he associates the diversity of forms with the properties of materials and techniques available to transform them. His fascination with the forces of the industrial revolution also surfaces when he elaborates on the generative power in new industrial techniques of production. He identifies the importance of "local, temporal, and personal" influences, those that reflect the operations of the market and the practical aspects of industrial production.[98]

In these early texts, Semper negotiates the desire for a historical integrity of styles with an admiration for the progressive dynamism of the industrial era. He admits that it is difficult to understand all the consequences of these new forces but believes that "while . . . art industries carry on aimlessly they unconsciously fulfill one noble task: the *disintegration of traditional types* by their ornamental treatment."[99] What orthodox theoreticians found threatening, namely the mass production of artistic decorations, Semper sees as positive, even noble, in the development of new styles. While they nostalgically tried to stabilize and revive historically proper types, he sees progress in their disintegration, (probably sensing the processes of commercial disintegration).

Eighteen years later, in 1869, his lecture "On Architectural Styles" more explicitly asserted that "the free will of the creative human spirit is the first and most important factor in the question of the origin of architectural styles," adding that "powerful individuals or corporate bodies" drive stylistic changes.[100] Moreover, it is the lack of continuity in the evolution of art and architecture that makes true progress possible. While his belief in the positive aspects of capitalism strengthens, he still struggles with the role of historical legacy within his theory. The concepts of redemptive entrepreneurial forces and discontinuities in artistic progress provide little insight into other cultures' architectural production. As if in desperation, he appropriates the knowledge of the world's architecture by theming it. Extending his belief in the value of current phenomena, he suggests that, throughout history and all over the world, architects did nothing *but* invent styles. In the lecture, he

summarizes each period and its architectural heritage with a sound-bite, thus painting a designer-friendly "panorama of the field of style."[101] In conclusion, he regretfully admits a conceptual compromise, saying that while looking for "a new [architectural] idea of universal historical importance," designers "must reconcile [themselves] to make do as best as [they] can with old" styles.[102] It was unavoidable that Semper's identification with the forces shaping Victorian England produced a conflicted vision of the relationships of past and present, since the symbolic production of that time was based on these hidden tensions.

Semper did not develop a new architectural style; it was unlikely anyone could in that era. The idea of a new fixed stylistic pattern made a good topic for explorations and theoretical inquiries but was antithetical to the dynamic character of the commercial revolution. Semper's writing did much more than solve the problem of style; it named and historically problematized particular symbolic practices of capitalism. While constantly struggling with the desire to establish a total and all-encompassing system of architectural thought, he focused attention on the very operations of the emerging technology of thought, offering perhaps his keenest insight in a discussion of dressing. In "The Textile Art: Considered in Itself and in Relation to Architecture," he focuses on decorations in architecture. Instead of elaborating on his earlier idea of the transcendental character of decorations, he highlights aspects that resonate with current commercial experimentation, focusing on their symbolic constitution. Semper associates adornment and dressing with theatrical practices, asserting that "the denial of reality, of the material, is necessary if form is to emerge as a meaningful symbol," its highest achievement being when an artist or an architect has "masked the material of the mask."[103] This observation about the history of decorations also highlighted prevalent but hidden assumptions in current ways of thinking. It revealed a dual maneuver in the constitution of meanings in visual production: first, the need to polarize symbolic and material aspects and then use one to hide the other. This artistic denial of material production resonates with symbolic practices that controlled meaning by erasing traces of their own operations.[104]

The modality of symbolic thought that Semper identified was crucial for the way architecture of Victorian England was designed and interpreted. The concept of an architectural style, and especially its eclectic application, would not be possible if not for the fragmentation in the way people understood and designed buildings— the essential fracture between the symbolic and material attributes of architecture. Only when the material structure was presumed meaningless could a building, like the train station in Figure 4.18, carry various masks of meaning. Arbitrarily selected and arranged, pieces of meaningful appearances

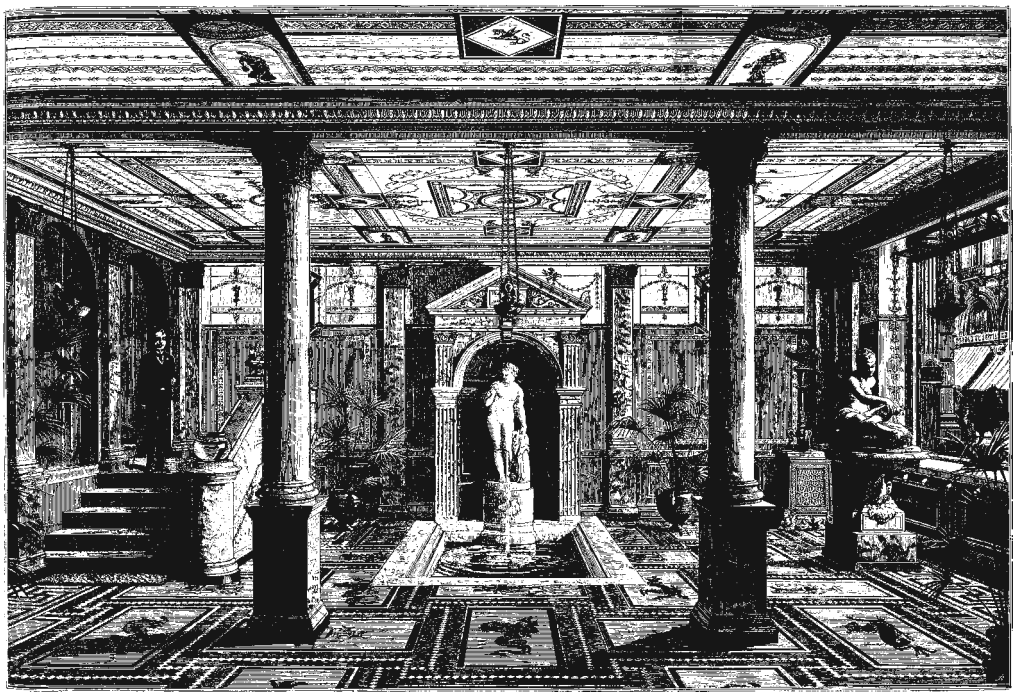


Figure 4.25

could then be glued together by themed narratives to create an impression of symbolic integrity. In this way, buildings could indiscriminately admit symbolic references, historical styles, or commercial messages.

A prime example: In 1887, the Pears Soap Company built a palatial edifice in New Oxford Street, London. The *ILN* heralded it as "one of the grandest architectural works" constructed during the Jubilee Year of Queen Victoria and reaching "the highest grade of artistic advertising."[105] Figure 4.25, an illustration published with the article, shows its main entry hall. While the space is almost industrial in its elemental simplicity, its surfaces are tediously decorated as if painted with ceramic mosaics and stone. According to the article, this elaborate wrapping refers to Pompeian precedents, specifically to the domestic spaces of Herculaneum.[106] It is not a coincidence that this interior resembles a view of the Roman scene in Figure 4.7b, the advertisement published at the time when the Pears building was being constructed. They both belonged to a larger promotional strategy. Printed images and the Pompeian hall articulated a symbolic narrative designed to infuse a bar of soap with meaning. In its well-behaved version, this theme refers to the happy union of soap and

water with the glorious past of the civilized world. Since uncontrolled emotions produce more attention and profit, however, this theme also refers to fantasies of Roman decadence and forbidden pleasures. The sculpture in the middle of Figure 4.25 resembles that in Figure 4.7b, not only as they relate to the pool of water but also in the way that both experiences produce a voyeuristic gaze. The printed advertisement implied a two-dimensional view into that distant reality. The building materializes such a view in the middle of London. The window on the right side of figure 4.25 opens to the busy New Oxford Street and passers-by may peep into this commercial diorama of a Pompeian house. Right behind the glass they can see a sculpture of a semi-nude woman. The totally naked one is placed at a distance.[107] While this arrangement might have resulted from Victorian notions of decency, it was another shrewd way of focusing attention. As in all commercial images, this is an exercise in perception control. The building frames tantalizing views, provides glimpses of the forbidden, wraps one's thoughts around a commercial theme, and turns a stylistic referent into a commercial fetish. Although the article primarily reinforces the narrative of the historical correctness of the Pompeian hall, the author is right in asserting that "the palatial building in New Oxford-street is an advertisement—the most magnificent within the scope of legitimacy—but an advertisement nevertheless, in spirit and effect."[108]

Like a commercial page in a magazine, the Pears building is a site of fragmented representation. Its physical parts and the ways a person may interact with them have been conceptually singled out, each to satisfy a particular need or agenda. Only one room, the main entry hall, was designated to serve as the primary promotional interface, to be a cavernous mask representing the Pompeian myth. According to the article, other interiors were designed in a completely different way: they were meant to support business operations, and the author never mentions any concern for their meanings. This symbolic discontinuity, the fact that behind the Roman-mosaic-covered walls were located some of the most technologically advanced offices of that time, rooms equipped with speaking-tubes and a system of mechanical intercommunication, was symbolically irrelevant. Even the front façade of the building (Figure 4.26) was not expected to relate to the Pompeian style. It supposedly embodies Italian characteristics, but actually its composition resulted from an attempt to subscribe to the pattern of street elevations and to establish a local center. This heavy-handed exercise in hierarchy has much in common with the arrangements of displays in the Great Exhibition and little, if anything, to do with the compositions of Herculaneum. Such architecture tested and publicly revealed the new constitution of meanings. The freedom to divide a design task into unrelated pieces, and to arbitrarily interpret them or leave them seemingly meaningless, made buildings like the Pears appropriate for the

commercial revolution. They affirmed that technicians of the symbolic, architects included, could organize the world by solving one problem at a time, assigning symbolic masks wherever desired, and that they were only obligated to provide a themed narrative to cover up any conceptual inconsistencies.

Figure 4.26

The symbolic constitution of Victorian architecture, its theoretical underpinning and commercial affinities, strongly resonated with later discourses of semioticians like Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. They theoretically separated the *signifier*, the sensory pattern created by what a person perceives, from the *signified*, the concept or meaning that the mental pattern elicits. Semiotics acknowledged language as its epistemological model and meaning exclusively in the reality of well-formed and properly interpreted signs. By doing so, semioticians assumed existence of a concept opposite to the symbolic, a possibility of non-sign reality—material reality without any meaning. Saussure asserted that the signifier (any perceivable form, for that matter) does not constitute a meaningful sign until it is interpreted.[109] Thus, not only the constitution of all those sites of advertising but also the application of masks of architectural style over the symbolically transparent structures discussed here were theoretically vindicated. Moreover, by stressing the arbitrary or conventional character of the relationship between the sign and its literal meaning, semioticians assured that the new technology of thought would have unlimited control over symbolism.

From a contemporary perspective, these theoretical assertions do not appear especially radical, but they signaled a profound transformation in the ways of thinking about architecture. While becoming a part of the commercial revolution, buildings had to lose their ability to trigger complex mental responses and instead subscribe to a system of well-defined signs. In a progressive mind, all other attributes of architecture were to fade away as irrelevant and imperceptible.

"I'LL MAKE ASSURANCE DOUBLE SURE." SHAKSPEARE.

CARDS OF ADMISSION AND PROSPECTUSES MAY BE HAD ON APPLICATION TO THE MANAGER.

Figure 4.27

Once again, advertising best revealed changes in thinking about architecture. In an 1886 issue of the *ILN*, the Chancery Lane Safe Deposit Company of London advertised its own building and services.[110] In capitalist society, where property is the highest value, a repository of accumulated wealth becomes a temple. A portico and a goddess in the center of the advertisement, shown here in Figure 4.27, make literal references to the temples of antiquity. The caption says the sculpture is "Minerva, Guardian and Protectress of Wisdom, Art, and Commerce." By employing a single-point perspective with its center in the middle of the poster, the composition appears highly structured. Light phenomena look convincing only in small fragments, while the whole interior is nothing more than a collection of local effects. Considering the general light distribution, an interior of this kind could never look as depicted. On the other hand, as if empirically proving that security depends on competent engineering, the two open safes in the front, especially their doors, appear materially and technically correct. They are shown with bolts of locks and rivets holding the door-plates together. All other visible elements of the interior seem immaterial, consisting of surfaces that merely fill an abstract wire frame of pure geometry.

This interior resembles not a real building but a coarse model, an impression heightened by the application of text all over it. All kinds of information, slogans, and proverbs are pasted onto available surfaces. Rarely, in the case of Minerva, for example, do they relate to the figure they accompany; more frequently, the text is freed from any obligation to resonate with its visual surrounding. Verbal messages are painted over floors, columns, steps, or pediments, as if those elements' primary function was to support narratives. The scroll surrounding the portico does not even pretend to belong to the building. It floats freely as the most explicit example of materialized text. Even when the depicted forms refer to specific components of historical buildings, white columns for example, they are crude, as if conceived by someone who memorized one or two basic features of the proper pattern. Generally, it seems that the more the interior becomes immaterial, the more the text dominates it. The building appears made of word-covered wallpaper with no structure behind it. The degree to which the composition has become cartoonish while its narratives have acquired three-dimensional and experiential qualities could be compared only to the examples of postmodern architecture a century later. One could experience this kind of space as if turning pages of a book, moving from one message to another. The interior has not been designed; it has been written and edited. The visual form that carries the texts is explicitly confused and inconsistent. The designers of this advertisement promote a temple of private property as a structure made of knowledge and trust, and apart from the strength of the safes its material form is of no symbolic consequence. This representation goes far

beyond the eclectic application of styles; it celebrates the total control of meanings and the disappearance of any need for architecture-specific qualities, those visual and material phenomena that could clutter literal symbolism. It equates architecture with referencing a well-formed system of signs and constructing a narrative that holds a collage of signs together. This businessman's vision represents the complete dismantling of the old ways of thinking about buildings, and the new modality of perception and sense-making mirrors the capitalist techniques of meaning production. It was at this time, during the late 1880s and 1890s, that architects pondered the "modern" crisis.

5 High Modernism according to Le Corbusier

Throughout most of the twentieth century, Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) was considered a creative genius instrumental in reshaping the built environments of the modern world. Historians agree that his was the primary contribution to the emerging High Modernism. He is still emblematic of the myth that the total design has redemptive powers. His work is said to mark a turning point in the development of Western architecture, a radical and self-conscious departure from the artistic legacy of the nineteenth century. Like all "early practitioners of modernism [who] were nearly unanimous in stressing their 'break' with the past in rejecting the possibility of returning to historical or stylistic themes in design," he defined himself in opposition to nineteenth-century legacy.[1] Together with Amédée Ozenfant, he proposed purism, a new movement that, like contemporaneous cubism, dismissed the old notion of naturalism in favor of abstraction of objects in painting. Unlike Victorians, he saw no conflict between the work of an artist and an engineer and merged aesthetic and technical considerations. Moreover, while running *L'Esprit Nouveau*, he challenged the romantic notion of an artist and intellectual and positioned himself as a businessman, a manager in charge of the magazine's commercial promotion.

The history of architecture has primarily registered what Le Corbusier constructed as his own image. His engagement with the legacy of the nineteenth century, however, was far more complex. He exemplifies how leaders of High Modernism in architecture combined the traditional aspects of the nineteenth-century legacy with the most nuanced understanding of Western sensitivity and imagination evolving at the beginning of the twentieth century. Le Corbusier possessed the skills of a commercial artist and used them to hide some and reveal other aspects of his worldview. Informed by the expertise of commercial strategists, he successfully promoted architects' ability, his own in particular, to totally understand, envision, and direct the dynamically changing world. In this way he redefined the function of an architect and aligned conceptual thinking with the practices of consumerism.

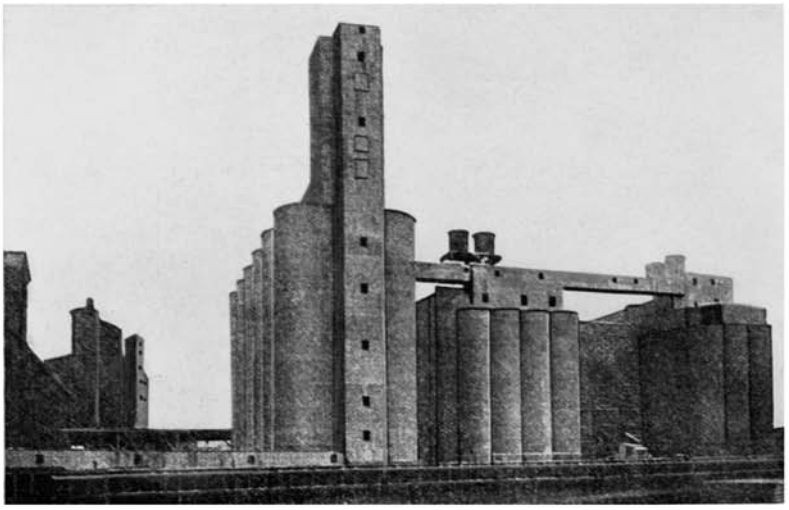
The complexity of issues involved in the emergence of High Modernism has already surfaced in contemporary scholarship, especially in studies of modern architecture that

problematized practices usually taken for granted. Mark Wigley, for example, focused on the function of the color white in modernist architecture.[2] He argues that omnipresent whiteness served as a disciplining device, a way of controlling perception itself.[3] White buildings showed decorations as superficial, revealed a more abstract constitution of fashion, and in doing so "transcended the bodily world, the world of physical desire." Blank architectural environments, according to Wigley, implied much more than the dismissal of conventional styles and their systems of interpretation. They aimed at controlling the realm of the unconscious.[4] The belief that architecture may visually control not only explicit messages but also tacit attitudes and fantasies is deeply rooted in the practices of the nineteenth century. The whiteness of modern walls was directly related to the commercial experiments of the Victorian era. As shown in chapter 4, the possibility of a neutral background, a material form devoid of symbolic meanings and eliciting no emotional response, was a sine qua non of making advertisements and elements of style into meaningful signs. This figure-ground distinction worked as long the assumption that the non-sign reality did not even register in one's consciousness was deeply internalized. And it should not be surprising that the first symptoms of the modernist turn surfaced when what was previously imperceptible materialized as a set of powerful images.

Figures 5.1a, 5.1b, and 5.1c show photographs of grain elevators from a collection published in 1913 by Walter Gropius in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes*.[5] These images immediately caught the attention of designers throughout Europe. They were reproduced, redrawn, and widely discussed. As early as the following year, sketches of similar evocative forms appeared in the works of Italian futurists Sant'Elia and Mario Chiattone. In 1914–15, Erich Mendelsohn sketched grain elevators from these photographs. Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant used them in the first issues of *L'Esprit Nouveau*.[6] In succeeding years, those photographs were published in other magazines and became much talked-about icons of modernism.[7] They "become almost commonplace, having been seen worldwide in [Le Corbusier's] *Vers une architecture*."[8]

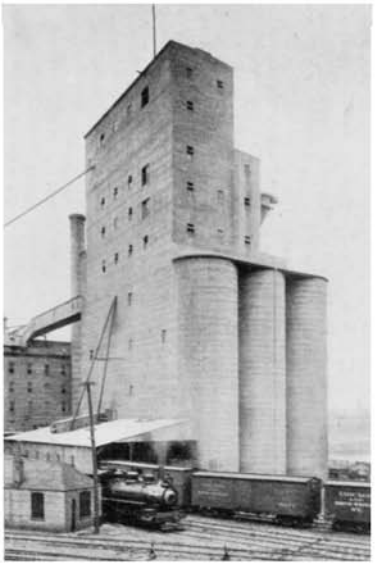
The illustrations rather than the text of Gropius's 1913 article made the biggest impact. Gropius was rather unconvincing when he argued that "American builders [*Erbauern*]," a synonym for artistically naive engineers, could design such powerful forms because they preserved "a natural feeling" for design, which supposedly justified European businessmen needing the services of sophisticated artists and architects.[9] The power of the article was in the evocative quality of its illustrations. In addition to these images, Figures 5.1a, 5.1b, and 5.1c also show a sample of the page layout. Sheets with these pictures were included as

WASHBURN
CROSBY GES.
KORNSILO



BUFFALO

WASHBURN
CROSBY GES.
KORNSILO



MINNEAPOLIS

BALTIMORE
UND
OHIO
EISENBAHN
GES.
KOHLENSILO

BALTIMORE

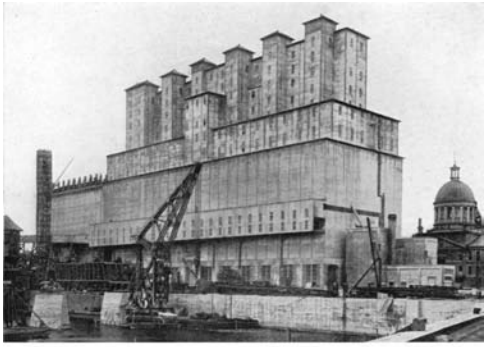
Figures 5.1a, 5.1b, and 5.1c

unnumbered inserts with unobtrusive captions. Each image of grain silos was composed to represent one monumental structure. Generally blank and simple, their forms varied. The scale and complexity of their compositions resembled both medieval castles and contemporary machine parts. At the same time, they were devoid of any stylistic pretense. This was enough to fire up the creative imagination of designers and provoke a new way of thinking.

Most important, however, was the degree to which these new images subverted the symbolic constitution of commercialized representation at the end of the nineteenth century. The pictures of grain elevators were antithetical to the way of thinking exemplified by Figure 4.27 in chapter 4. They shocked the world by revealing that one could totally eliminate textually coded meanings while still producing an engaging architectural form. Paradoxically, what was almost imperceptible in the image of the Chancery Lane Safe Deposit building—namely the materiality and shape of solid space behind commercial messages—became explicitly present in the 1913 representation of industrial structures. Blank grain silos highlighted vulnerability in the way meanings of architecture had been constituted at the end of the nineteenth century. These utilitarian buildings belonged to the same category as railroad infrastructure, train stations, or blank urban walls, all the environments that Victorian advertisers made into meaningless backgrounds. Yet these new evocative figures could not be easily dismissed as Saussurean non-signs. Even if one knows perfectly well that the form of a silo resulted from processes that had nothing to do with coding symbolic meanings, such a structure forcefully implies symbolic associations. Its clarity of shape resembles that of a linguistic or graphic sign; it registers like a symbolic statement and solicits a response. No preexisting symbolic narrative was waiting to interpret it, though. Its inherent logic was that of a practical tool, a machine. Reproduced and disseminated, these signs without conventional meanings questioned old preconceptions and fascinated those who sensed limitations imposed by the reign of old symbolic narratives. The well-formed non-sign reality revealed opportunities that had not been possible in the nineteenth century.

Le Corbusier published *Vers une architecture* in 1923, best known in English as *Towards a New Architecture,* which was based on articles printed in *L'Esprit Nouveau* in 1920–21.[10] In the section on "Mass," he included many pictures of grain elevators, which illustrate well his radical ideas and provocative way of arguing them. Later, however, historians observed a disturbing inconsistency. While Le Corbusier was promoting architectural honesty, he apparently cheated in his own publication. Figures 5.2a and 5.2b show the same

photograph of grain silos in Montreal. The first image shows how it was reproduced in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes*. The second one comes from *Vers une architecture* and reveals that Le Corbusier undoubtedly altered the source.[11] His picture is slightly cropped and its composition is different. The new image is cleaner and directs attention more precisely. The dome visible in the right side of Figure 5.2a has been eliminated, most likely because it had been competing as a figurative sign with the industrial building. The three-dimensionality of the main structure has been modified too. While the first picture appears to have been taken during a cloudy day, the second selectively enhances the visual plasticity of its components. The directional light emphasizes a spatial modulation of the top part. The horizontal band in the lower part of the building and the water embankment appear much brighter, and this effect articulates compositional divisions. Even the crane in the later image shows unexpected contrast. Somebody tediously altered the photograph, and those changes are not random. They all resonate with the book's lessons on architecture. The section starts with a famous statement that "architecture is the masterly, correct and magnificent play of masses brought together in light."[12] The original picture was not correct enough. The photograph published by Gropius was too murky and did not sufficiently support the argument.



Figures 5.2a and 5.2b

Le Corbusier was not timid about his image manipulations. While someone who had not seen the original pictures published in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes* might have overlooked the alterations in Figure 5.2b, anybody could notice corrections in other pictures published in *Vers une architecture*. Figure 5.3, for example, shows another set of grain elevators illustrating the same section. The original source of this illustration is not known, but a comparison to another reproduction of the same photograph published six years earlier in *Why Build Fireproof?* shows that the picture has been totally painted over.[13] Elements of the

Figure 5.3

industrial environment are simplified and cleaned up to the point of looking cartoonish. Light-related differences are graphically highlighted and produce an impression that these structures are just artificially lit models of themselves. The randomness of physical reality has been eliminated. Even the textures of materials have been removed. The tubes containing conveyor belts at the top of the picture look as if somebody drew contour lines first and then filled them in with color. The windows in those structures seem loosely sketched in. Imprecise parallel strokes replaced a subtle pattern of what looked like a wooden decking on the earlier reproduction. Water in the background looks like brushed steel. Crude pictures like this one are common in Le Corbusier's publications. Such modifications were often more competently executed, but these types of pictures illustrate many of his books and a variety of subjects. He even altered depictions of famous historical monuments.

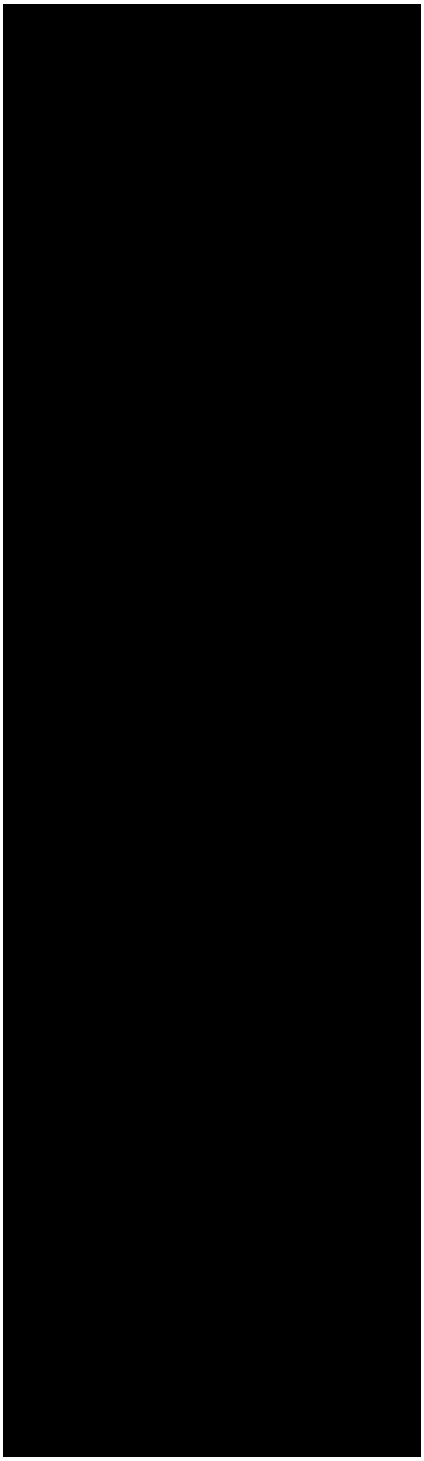
Beatriz Colomina discusses those illustrations in *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*,[14] devoting an entire chapter, "Photography," to the strange role photography played in Le Corbusier's work. Her analysis reveals curious practices, for example, a habit of altering images of his projects long after they were built. Le Corbusier seemed much more concerned about the ever-evolving conceptual ideas or unrealized intentions than the material outcome of his design. Disregarding physical facts, his conceptual process never ends. According to Colomina, when an already-constructed piece of architecture

"enters the two-dimensional space of the printed page it returns to the realm of ideas. The function of photography is not to reflect, in a mirror image, architecture as it happens to be built. Construction is a significant moment in the process, but by no means its end product. Photography and layout construct another architecture in the space of the page."[15] Thus, in Le Corbusier's world, the disseminated representation replaces material architecture as the final product of conceptual processes. Moreover, Colomina identifies in his drawings an even more questionable attitude toward the living world. His focus on constructed perception and disregard for the empirical facts of buildings are symptomatic of a deeper problem. His obsessive drawing from or over photographs or postcards seems to reveal a desire to symbolically appropriate the exterior world.[16] That observation is especially apt when Colomina considers how he used postcards of colonial reality in Algeria, especially of Algerian women.

What contemporary scholars find disturbing or difficult to explain in Le Corbusier's use of photography and sketching indicates that his practices challenged traditional academic assumptions and still resist scholarly insight.[17] At the time when commercial experimentation blended with everyday practices and knowledge production, when the most cartoonish image (like Figure 4.11 in chapter 4) could masquerade as a photojournalistic document, artists sensed the radical character of those changes. It was no coincidence that the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau* included extensive articles about Georges Seurat and Paul Cézanne. As Jonathan Crary points out, those painters used their artistic skills to test ways of thinking triggered by new technologies of perception and attention.[18] *L'Esprit Nouveau* was not only selectively rooted in the works of those painters of the late nineteenth century but was also an integral part of a new wave of artistic experimentation with mass media that swept across Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century.[19] What theoreticians were not ready to analyze, artists entered and explored as a representational operation.

The Formative Period

Focusing on the initial phase of his career—the period of his *voyage d'Orient,* when he combined sketching with taking pictures—one can see how Le Corbusier gradually absorbed these new technologies of thought. In Giuliano Gresleri's words, those discoveries recorded in the *carnets* of 1910 and 1911 became for the young designer a "refoundation of the discipline" of architecture.[20] His visual production, better than his writing, reveals how, still known as Jeanneret, he reshaped his own sensitivity. During his voyage to the East he developed a new way of looking, and the camera was as instrumental as sketching in these



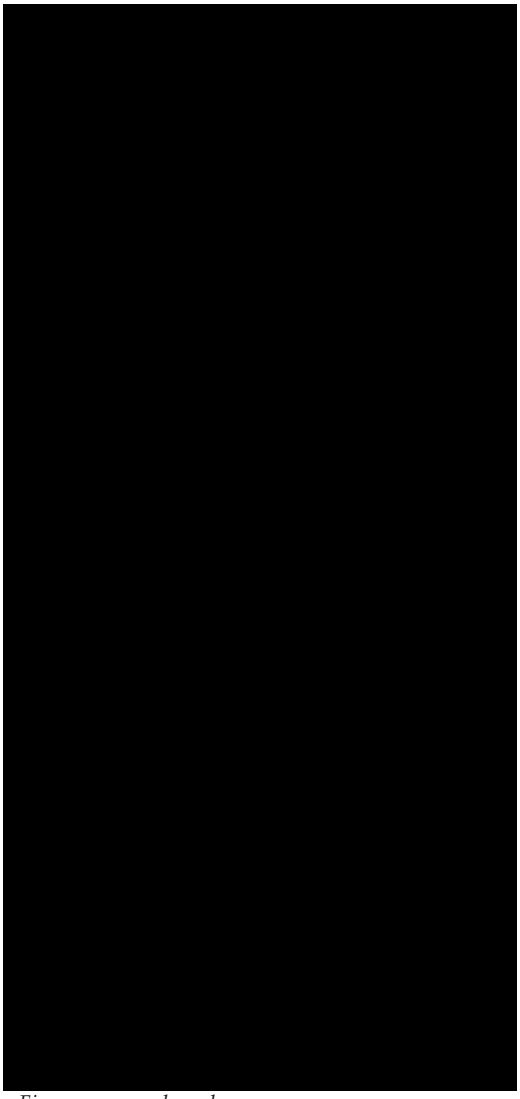
Figures 5.4a, 5.4b, 5.4c, and 5.4d

processes. The sequence of photographs published in Gresleri's *Le Corbusier, viaggio in Oriente* shows that he identified and focused on one of the key assumptions that the nineteenth century built into symbolic thinking—the taken-for-granted dependence on preexisting narratives in one's interactions with works of art, architecture, and visual forms in general.[21] He gradually managed to sensitize himself to those phenomena that interact with one's mind like the forms of grain elevators, those that one may observe as visual signs open to multiple readings and representational transformations.

His early images, for example Figure 5.4a and other pictures published by Gresleri, show that initially Jeanneret's attention was drawn to conventional subjects such as monuments, fountains, or towers—that is, nominal figures that operate like well-formed signs relying on a preexisting interpretation.[22] He foregrounded them in compositions, as in Figure 5.4a, which frequently emphasize the symmetry or the geometric center of a picture. Gradually, though, he learned to observe and enhance discernable, yet nonverbal, attributes.[23] His photographs start to explore various degrees of abstraction, visual phenomena that resist naming and easy description. A sign of this transformation may be observed in Figure 5.4b, which shows a shift in the expectations of how an image conveys something. That view is no longer

concerned with the conventionality of the figurative depiction. Although highly selective and framing a relatively homogeneous environment, it shows equally well the material façades and idiosyncratic forms superimposed on them—shadows cast on the buildings. A seemingly common view of a town square is overlaid with an arbitrary and temporary pattern of dark shapes that destabilize what one expects to see. Around this time, Jeanneret began experimenting with how perceptibility of things depends on light and visual framing. The pictures on pages 123, 124, 134, and 140 in Gresleri admit high contrast, aerial perspective, even back lighting. Their compositions no longer foreground monuments but rather explore visual idiosyncrasy in each view. Another significant development dealt with abstract qualities in material reality, those characteristics that depend less on light or position of the eye but rather are inherent in the spatial arrangement of material environments. Gresleri published one of the earliest pictures identifying such attributes on pages 141, 142, and 149. They show old structures seen from the Danube, but their abstractness still depended on the distance and the conditions of the air. It seems that Istanbul provided Jeanneret with many opportunities to explore this new issue. Photographs of a cemetery printed on pages 248 and 249, as well as those of the city burned during the Great Fire of 1911, pages 266 to 269 (one of them shown in Figure 5.4c), clearly reveal this shift in exploratory emphasis. Because what they help to observe is not view-specific, these could be multiple images, each showing the same environment. It is no longer a matter of a particular visual interaction of elements in the camera's viewfinder. Rather, one can imagine walking among those remnants of burned buildings, being surrounded by incomplete walls and evocative chimneys, and the environment would imply different degrees of discernability of the architecture. Stripped of less permanent elements and physically incomplete, these structures seem to visually operate like grain elevators. They emphasize general patterns of spatial and material order while diminishing those attributes that would make it easy to interpret their practical use or conventional meanings. At the end of his long voyage, Jeanneret looked at famous buildings in this new way. As far as the framing of perception is concerned, his pictures printed on pages 348 and 355, one shown here as Figure 5.4d, are simple and highly selective. They carefully test depicted elements, their relationships and spatial characteristics, and in doing so these photographs operate like conceptual sketches.

Gresleri's *Le Corbusier* includes not only the sequence of photographs but also a selection of drawings produced by Jeanneret at the same time. Those pictures and others included in facsimile reproductions of his carnets show that, regardless of the medium, his initial sketches and photos were based on similar assumptions about subjects, compositions, and final appearances of images.[24] While traveling in Germany, immediately preceding



Figures 5.5a, 5.5b, and 5.5c

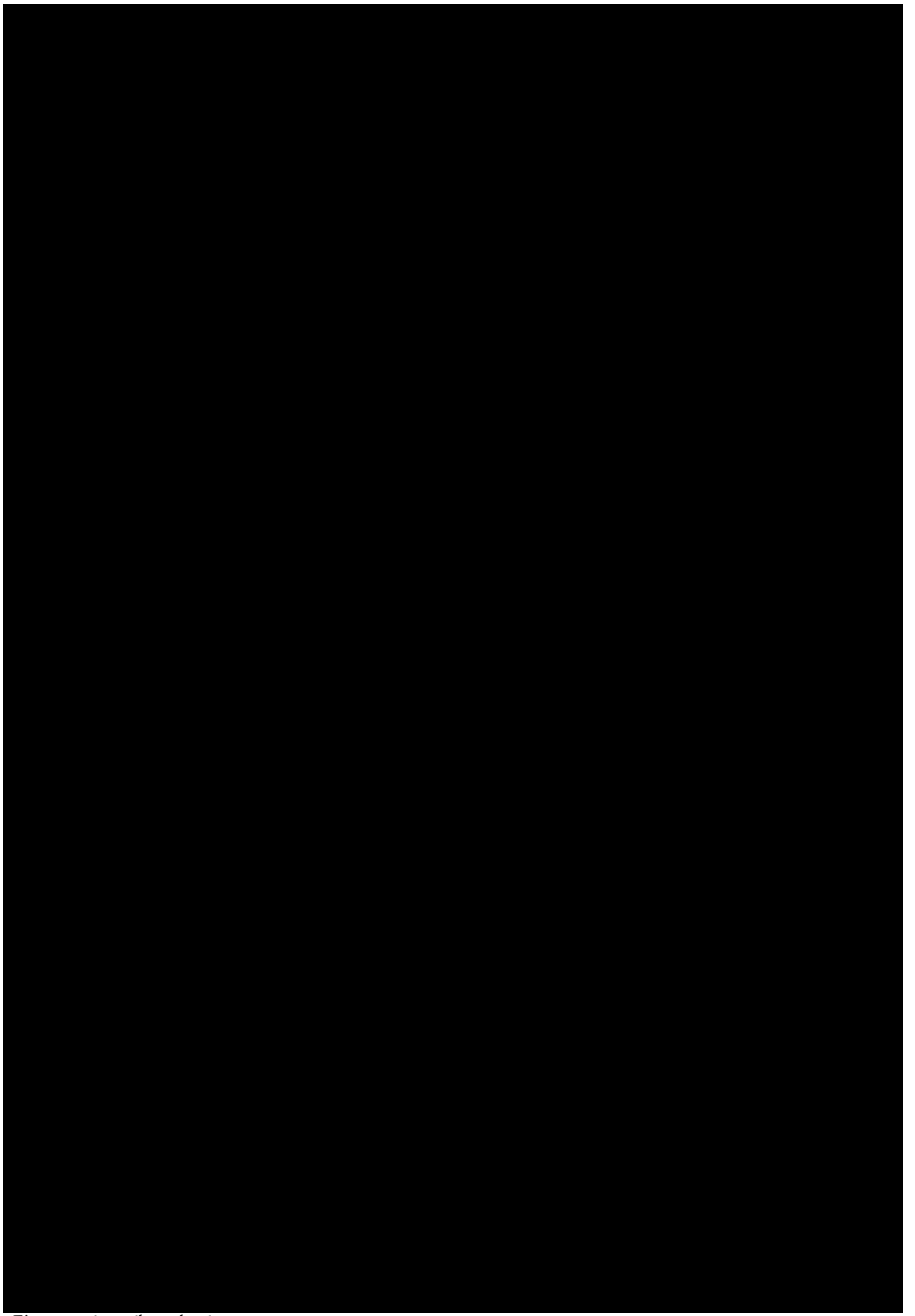
his *voyage d'Orient,* Jeanneret seemed to value descriptive realism in a drawing; that is, he associated tropes of verbal interpretation with discrete figures.[25] Consequently, these kinds of drawings primarily focus on elements, which due to their shape or function are easy to identify. In this way they are similar to the photograph shown in Figure 5.4a and the way it foregrounds what is easy to decipher and interpret. Although his early sketchbooks include many drawings that a camera could not produce, such as free-hand plans or diagrams, one can also find in them many perspectival views of elevations, interiors, or entire buildings. Figure 5.5a, a drawing published in *Les voyages d'Allemagne,* Carnet 2, shows that his image of a house admits a collection of figures such as a window, door, roof, and outdoor plant, each graphically articulated as a singled-out object. The quantity of such discernable pieces dictates the complexity of a drawing. Moreover, the descriptive function of the drawing is enhanced by verbal annotations, which literally identify certain elements and thus speed up communication. The black-and-white Figure 5.5a actually included color washes, but as in other drawings of this kind, the layers of paint are not meant to explore perceptual phenomena.[26] Instead of depicting color-related attributes of light, in these drawings, like children's coloring books, color follows the contour of physical objects. Washes of color are evenly applied within already-defined shapes. This attitude changed when Jeanneret gradually moved beyond descriptive realism. As it was with photographs, viewing from a long distance triggered new explorations of figures and patterns of built and natural environments. Drawings of that new kind, for example Figure 5.5b, published

in Gresleri on page 156, depict physically existing forms but graphically keep them on the edge of discernability. Lines and smudges mix; sometimes their edges align, sometimes not, and it is generally difficult to tell when they become figurative objects. Similar images published by Gresleri on pages 141 and 155–59, those drawn from the Danube and especially other evocative studies of Balkan landscapes, double the exploratory character of photographs 5.4b and 5.4c. They all are drawn not to assign forms to things one already knows but rather to help one to register the actual complexity of phenomena being observed.

While discovering this new way of thinking, Jeanneret started to develop much more precise and discriminate modes of representation. Just like the photograph shown in Figure 5.4d, his new sketches disregard expectations concerning comprehensive communication (the assumed property of descriptive realism). They did not have to be figuratively perfect either. Frequently their lines and shapes are as sketchy as those drawn at the beginning of the *voyage d'Orient*. What really mattered was his ability to graphically distill a particular perceptual characteristic and increase its conceptual accessibility. New drawings primarily tested how one's attention may operate within the field of vision and how one chooses what to register. That is why pictures produced at the end of the voyage carefully measure what and how things become visible. Both the photo in Figure 5.4d and the sketch in Figure 5.5c show historical villas in or near Tivoli, Villa d'Este, and Hadrian's Villa. Both are relatively simple, composed of central and peripheral elements.[27] The central, gate-like structure in the photograph and the white plaza in the sketch are sufficiently revealed to understand how they are defined. Thus, the gate is singled out as a physical object, and the empty space of the plaza is experientially bound by the opening of the entry shown in the foreground and the material elements on its distant edges. On the other hand, peripheral elements, the horizon and those things closest to the viewer, extend beyond frames of pictures. Walls and floors in the foreground are shown only as much as necessary to direct attention to something else. Clues about them are enough to imply that these are big surfaces, but it is difficult to think about their entire forms. Only depicted fragments are relevant. In the physical reality of Villa d'Este, all these elements were compositionally and materially related. Thus, the articulation and finishes of the wall on the left side of Figure 5.4d and the surfaces of the gate are similar. The vestibule in the foreground of Figure 5.5c and the wall in the distance were constructed in the same way. It is Jeanneret's way of looking that makes them different. In this way visual studies, on paper or film, facilitate interactions between architecture and thought. This mode of representation becomes a new conceptual tool capable of directing attention and exploring relationships in material reality.

During that relatively short time, in 1910 and 1911, Jeanneret's sketchbooks recorded a profound change in his attitude toward visual perception. His interests shifted from responding to an already-ordered world of material objects to shaping the sense of perceived reality. Although Figure 5.4d exemplifies how far he managed to improve the representational richness of photography, it also identifies the limitations of that medium. What makes a photorealistic image into a powerful tool of tacit persuasion also marks its weakness as a conceptual tool. The seemingly mechanical record of appearances implies truth in what one sees because the work of a photographer becomes imperceptible. In contrast, any sketch presents a record of choices one has made and the emphasis placed when one focuses attention. That is why drawing became Jeanneret's medium of choice.

Figures 5.6a, 5.6b, and 5.6c exemplify how, at the end of his voyage, Jeanneret mastered this kind of sketching.[28] All three depict the same view: the Vatican, seen from its gardens. They are very similar in size and composition, each occupying one page in the carnet. It also seems that they were drawn from the same position. These images, however, show an alert and sensitive way of considering how to see that environment. The first one, Figure 5.6a, focuses primarily on the linear continuity of walls and buildings, which are shaded while the ground is left blank, like the sky. The darker structure seems to float on the page. If one looked at this image upside down, the composition would not change much. Details are concentrated within the grayish horizontal bar, and some of them, like the dots of windows and an arch on the right end, help one to see the scale of the building. Only a relatively complete and conventional contour of the basilica on the left side is well recognizable, and thus it stabilizes interpretations of the entire picture. The abstract elongated form on the right becomes an extension of a conventional iconic church. As if focusing on this uneasy dependence, in the second drawing Jeanneret omitted almost all the details and reconsidered the relationships between the basilica and the walls. Figure 5.6b is a much quicker, more intuitive sketch. It primarily tests the degree to which the idiosyncratic form of the Vatican buildings could be merged with the iconic form of the church. While refocusing the gaze, he must have noticed that the ground may play a unifying role in this way of thinking. These structures read much more interconnected when, instead of observing their figurative differences, one sees them all as buildings resting on the ground. Random strokes in the lower part of Figure 5.6b sufficed to shift perception in that way. After this quick study, Jeanneret was ready to explore the actual complexity of the view again. Figure 5.6c is the most developed of the three sketches. The basilica is still in the picture but it is shown, like that in Figure 5.6b, as an incomplete figure. Its dome is treated as belonging to the same visual category as the walls. The gardens are much more tangible than in the other sketches. They are not, however, to be thought of as pastoral landscapes. Rather, the



Figures 5.6a, 5.6b, and 5.6c

image shows them as a visually modulated mass on which the buildings stand. The discovery that the walls of the Vatican embody the characteristic of an urban machine is surprisingly vivid. When the icon of the basilica is no longer allowed to direct interpretations, the whole view changes. The first sketch implies qualities of a quiet oasis. The third one looks like a battleship on a stormy sea. The last image is the most evocative in the sequence. In all likelihood, when, once known as Le Corbusier, he erased the dome in his photograph of Canadian grain elevators shown in Figure 5.2b, he remembered this lesson from the Vatican gardens.

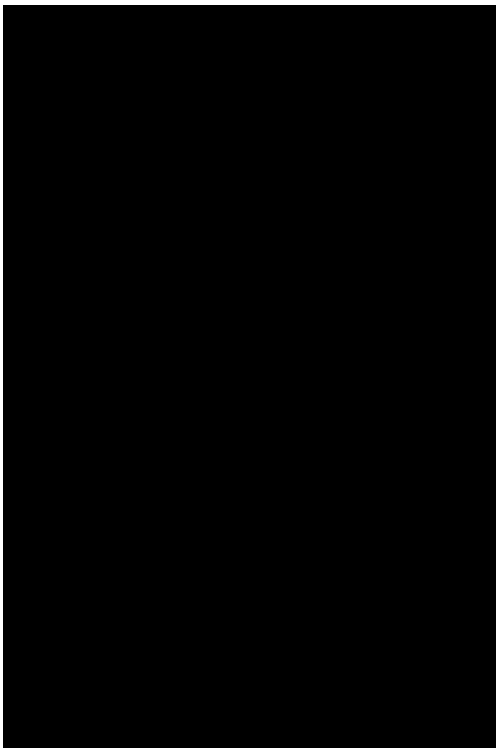
Italy marks the end of his *voyage d'Orient*. If on that day in Rome, instead of sketching he had photographed the same view three times, his images would not differ. Le Corbusier understood the conceptual limitations of the photochemical medium, and this was the reason he stopped taking pictures at about the same time he finished the voyage.[29] When later in his life he reflected on that decision and said that "[t]he camera is a tool for idlers," he probably referred to the way he positioned himself as a designer from 1911 on.[30] Idlers among designers are not those who are too lazy to draw and instead prefer to just push the shutter release of a camera. Rather, idlers are those who perceive things the way they have been ordered conceptually by others. Designers should actively participate in that ordering; they should not only compose the material world but, first of all, they should constantly organize perception and thinking itself.

Techniques of Conceptual Promotion

It was this changed Le Corbusier, the designer of thought, who, a few years later, started using publications as his conceptual medium. Years of working as the financial manager of *L'Esprit Nouveau* in charge of its advertising-based budget gave him firsthand experience with the contemporary practices of commercial promotion. He already had the skills of a graphic designer, but mass media helped him explore how people interacted with reproduced reality. *L'Esprit Nouveau* served as the initial testing ground, but his own books, *Vers une architecture* and *L'Art décoratif,* provided the best opportunity to fully engage with new techniques of thought. Both books are saturated with unusual images: individual photographs illustrating text, multiple photographs completely replacing text, images reproduced from newspapers or from catalogues of commercial products, postcards, pictures of printed documents, pictures of hand-written notes, scientific diagrams, architectural drawings, sketches of different objects, and even images drawn by children. Le Corbusier not only collected unusual pictures but also repeated them in the same book, the same way he repeated catchy phrases.[31] That diversity of forms, subjects, and ways of delivering them was

intentional. It helped to turn these publications into "perfect machine[s]" for producing thoughts.[32] The experimentation was based on recognition of vulnerabilities in the way people respond to a printed medium, many of them resulting from those coexistent but conflicted assumptions engendered by the Victorian era. Le Corbusier explored such practices, tested their constitution, and used them wherever he could promote new ideas. In many cases he not only followed older commercial techniques but also selectively enhanced them by eliminating outdated assumptions that only the most conservative readers still relied on. Thus, for example, during the third decade of the twentieth century, he no longer needed to hide his modifications of photographs.

Figure 5.7a shows an illustration from *Vers une architecture*, a blatantly altered photograph of the interior of the Santa Maria in Cosmedin church in Rome. To support the argument about the spiritual purity of this church's solid geometry, he highlights the volumetric structure in the foreground and erases conceptually redundant elements in the background. As Figure 5.7b (a contemporary photo of the same interior) shows, many other pieces surround the pulpit. All these columns, beams, and even the background wall have been graphically removed in *Vers une architecture*.[33] Le Corbusier's instructions specifying which elements of the interior belong to his argument and which should



Figures 5.7a, 5.7b, and 5.7c

be covered up with black paint survived and are shown in Figure 5.7c. The illustration of Santa Maria in Cosmedin is unapologetic. The outcome is so unrealistic that even a reader with no knowledge of photographic or printing techniques would see that the original photo has been altered. Figure 5.7a not only illustrates a particular narrative but also exploits the fact that, after a century of training, readers accepted that images were to actively shape a particular way of viewing and interpreting, like sketches. Modern readers no longer needed the safety net of empirical truth to feel at home in the world transformed by technologies of thought. They did, however, need some help with seeing the world as their intellectual and artistic leaders saw it. Progressive thinkers did not depend on the polar opposition between objectivity in mechanical representation and subjectivity in interpretation. They acknowledged that reality is subject to never-ending processes of perceptual and symbolic transformations, just as is the world of commodities. Le Corbusier's book implies that architecture and architects belong to these cultural phenomena. When he graphically alters old monuments of architecture or keeps redrawing his own projects long after they have been physically constructed, Le Corbusier does nothing more than act as a modern designer of symbolic thought.[34]

Although images seem crucial in these explorations, *Vers une architecture* and *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* test all the means at their disposal. All elements of the printed pages take part in capturing attention and guiding thought. They contradict, clash with, redefine, or reinforce each other.

Sometimes multiple images are sufficient to create such dynamic interactions. A good example—two pages from *Vers une architecture*—is shown in Figure 5.8 [35] Both images show details designed by Michelangelo in the Saint Peter basilica in Rome. Two photographs dominate a full-spread layout. Captions and headings play only a secondary role.[36] A person looking at them quickly becomes immersed in this visual environment. Unlike the illustrations of Santa Maria in Cosmedin or the grain elevators (Figure 5.3), these images have not been modified to make them more conclusive, but to the contrary, intentionally create a degree of visual confusion. They have more in common with Figure 5.4b, the photograph of shadows on conventional elevations, than with 5.2b, the Canadian grain elevator. Large and dark, they aim to strike a difficult balance between showing a material façade and representing its conceptual structure. They invite the viewer to simultaneously register a surface made of stone as well as its immaterial order. Shadows play a significant role here, articulating the mechanics of Michelangelo's design. Both pictures are fragments of the same Anderson photograph that Le Corbusier bought during his 1921 trip and

cropped to illustrate his ideas. Other than the tight framing of views, these images have been manipulated in only one way: one of them has been rotated 90 degrees, a shift in orientation that profoundly enhances their evocative capabilities.[37] As soon as the reader decodes one of these images as a fragment of an upright building, the other image contradicts this interpretation. Arranged in this way, the images disarm preconceptions about material structure and propose an abstracted view of architecture. The visual density of these two pages resonates with Le Corbusier's discussion of how Michelangelo's brilliant ideas were buried in the later development of the basilica. Yet it is not a conclusive illustration of a particular style or concept but rather a visual invitation to search for traces of a unique way of thinking embodied in the basilica. With almost nothing on these pages to read, readers visually immersed in these large pictures may experience how to avoid the trap of conventional ways of looking that make Rome "the damnation of [the] half-educated."[38] This graphic arrangement follows the best tradition of commercial experimentation but it uses these techniques to shape architectural curiosity.

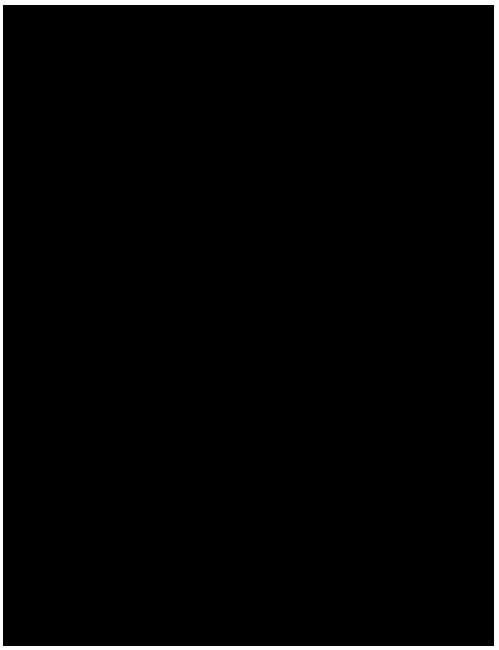


Figure 5.8

Le Corbusier, a master of visual means, also used text as an active medium in his publications. His narratives both experiment with and follow the most conservative patterns of the nineteenth century. Just as Victorian designers did, he frequently uses stable and safe narratives to complement representational experimentation and to provide comfort to people unsettled by the speed and magnitude of the commercial revolution. He affirms, for instance, the stereotypical superiority of the Western "civilized man [who] wears a well-cut suit and is the owner of easel pictures and books." According to Le Corbusier, only such a "highly cultivated man" is capable of the "multifarious sensation" necessary to fully understand "the drama of life: nature, men, the world."[39] In *Vers une architecture,* this superior worldview is deeply rooted in the same system of proper narratives that stabilized Victorian England. A good example is the notion of "supreme determinism," a set of transcendental rules that

Figure 5.9

supposedly bring harmony to material and spiritual reality.[40] Like Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Le Corbusier argues that such rules—physical and moral principles—are the "laws of nature, the laws that govern our own [human] nature and universe."[41] They secure the possibility of goodness and beauty in any place and time. At this point, the only difference between the two thinkers is in how openly they refer to the divine origin of these laws.[42] By his own admission, Le Corbusier was "exhorted by Ruskin" in his youth and he never abandoned the safety net of those semitheological beliefs that Victorians needed to conceal the processes of redefining social and cultural relationships.[43] The same assumptions steeped in essentialism or transcendental values, which helped to justify colonial ambitions and commodify the world, help to reduce progress to refinement of feeling and good taste in the first quarter of the twentieth century. When cultural development is equated to the "emergence of the Essential,"there is no need to measure the advancement of civilizations by any social or political standard, for instance.[44] Social issues enter *Vers une architecture* when cultured readers are threatened by the "human animal" of the working class rebelling against their order.[45]

Le Corbusier employs these traditional assumptions but also repackages them, like an industrial commodity that sells when it seems new and attractive. Consider, for example, how he announces the importance of truth in *L'Art décoratif*. Figure 5.9 shows that two-page-spread layout at the beginning of the section on "The Sense of Truth."[46] The blank page on the left helps to create a moment of suspension, a discontinuity from the previous section, and then the poster-like arrangement arrests one's attention. An evocative image is intensified by the bold heading and a caption that says: "Whitewash, Diogenes . . . The hour of architecture. Truth, sense of truth . . . [*sic*]." These are all glimpses of the narrative that will follow, and they refer to ways of distilling the essential aspects of life and sense-making. They introduce a broader conceptual assertion, or rather "rational faith," that "things exist because they have a reason."[47] As if to reinforce the fragmented announcement of the caption, there is nothing about the seashell image that might be automatically associated with "The Sense of Truth." Rather, this picture's unusual degree of formal integrity clashes with

the fragmented character of the stream-of-thought-like text. The seashell is organic, but it is also a form resulting from an elemental need and a singular rule of construction—its size increases because each layer of growth is of the same shape but larger. The view highlights these perfect attributes: the composition is symmetrical; forms progress from small to big; and, additionally, the seashell fills a black rectangle. The image implies that truth can be found in this integrity of essential qualities and principles. There is nothing superfluous about the function and construction of the seashell and there is nothing redundant in the way it is represented. Even before one starts to read about honesty of purpose in life and architecture, this composition wraps one's imagination around the subject matter. In addition to the clash of text and image, the page also creates a tension between a relatively common object and an absolute concept—the truth. That tension suggests that the sense of truth is revealed in a particular way of perceiving and thinking about material reality. This contrived photograph would lose its evocative power if one of its attributes were altered, be it the viewing angle, direction of light, consistency of the black background, or the position and shape of the rectangle.

The relationship between image and text was important in Le Corbusier's explorations of mass media. In Victorian England, that relationship was relatively stable; pictures tacitly experimented with thought while accompanying narratives provided explicit means for explaining and justifying. In *Vers une architecture* and *L'Art décoratif*, the function of words is much more dynamic. Text not only rationally explains but also instructs the reader, step by step, how to react to a new idea. For example, while revealing that, contrary to common knowledge, old masters sometimes left the hidden part of sculptures unfinished, he writes: "Lean over and look at the other side of the head, behind the profile. *This other side is not carved.* Disaster! Cheating! Falsehood! Treason!"[48] The sensational moment of the discovery is italicized. Then, almost like TV shows that play audience responses in the background to cue viewer reactions , Le Corbusier tells the reader to be shocked. He frequently implies when one should be puzzled, amused, or satisfied with an answer he gives. In this construction of symbolic sense, text is much more symbolically active than was common in Victorian England. It shortcuts the persuasive phase of explaining and engages mechanisms of judgment and sense-making directly.

Le Corbusier transforms nineteenth-century practices in other ways. For example, in *L'Art décoratif* he reveals the degree to which the popularity of historical styles depends on arbitrary assumptions about their symbolic meanings. To do so he quotes a hypothetical "bourgeois" saying: "[m]y Louis XIV armchair (so majestic) with an admixture of Louis

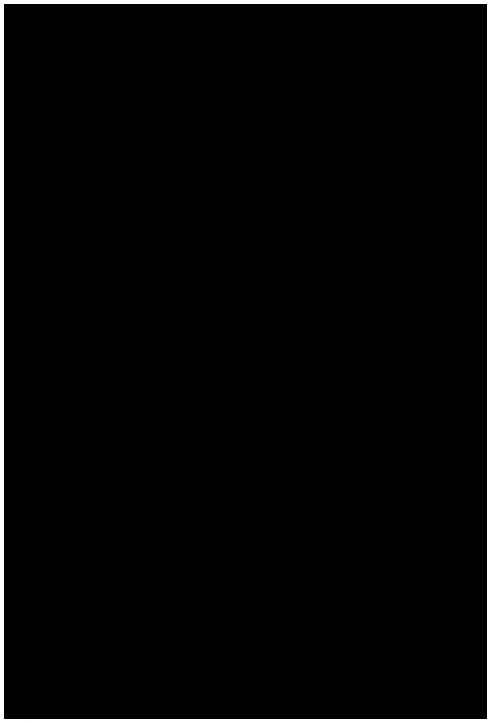


Figure 5.10

XVI (of such distinction): (a+b)2 = a2 + b2 + 2ab." Figure 5.10 shows how a set of pictures from a commercial catalogue follows this statement, as if illustrating it.[49] This peculiar combination of a judgmental remark, a mathematical formula, and a picture of decorated commodities is repeated a few times. Absurd as it may seem, this actually is a precise probing into common ways of thinking. It uses an uncritical attitude toward historical decorations as a springboard to reveal how the traditional sense of style is constituted. The desire to have majestic furniture—and even more so the unequivocal association of distinction with a particular historical precedent—seem unassailable. They depend on two assumptions: at a certain level of wealth, one's social and economic status should be expressed by appropriate decorations, and a system of historical styles provides the means to do so. However, when the mathematical formula is inserted into the text, it shatters that seemingly stable structure. The mathematical equation is a logical statement of truth, something that modern people learn to verify in school. By contrast, the formula exposes and destabilizes other and arbitrary beliefs. The operation is even more revealing when commercial images are added. It becomes apparent that this system of justifications actually promotes unimaginative and obsolete products. To make it completely clear, on the next page, Le Corbusier quotes a hypothetical "industrialist": "For an acceptable price I can only produce junk. But decorations will save me; let us cover *everything* with decoration. Let us hide the junk beneath decoration."[50] This chapter in *L'Art décoratif* exposes why ornaments are outdated and historical references false. In conclusion, it proposes that undecorated steel reflects the best of humanity's evolutionary progress. The power of the overall argument depends less on its rational consistency and more on its ability to play with thought, to create moments for reflection on common symbolic practices. It is essential that the text and images identify and destabilize targeted preconceptions, and only then the new way of thinking may enter the discourse.

The fact that Le Corbusier obsessively drew over printed images is consistent with this attitude toward the technology of thought. The author of *Vers une architecture* and *L'Art décoratif* knew the degree to which mass media shaped one's ability to perceive and think. He tested printed pictures the same way he explored a view of the Vatican. Before he decided which postcard, newspaper, or catalogue image might resonate with his ideas, he had to probe its representational constitution. He redrew them to study what could be or has been made thinkable.[51] As designers usually do, he acted on his intuitive discoveries and graphically worked his way through the possibilities they created.[52]

While he was reusing some and redefining other elements of the nineteenth-century modality of thought, Le Corbusier could not formulate a cohesive theory of such expertise. He could not turn thought engineering into an overt method because it served him well to operate like the Victorian commercial designers or strategists—to hide his own efforts behind fascinating effects and impressions. It was in his interest to keep these phenomena of perception fluid and dynamic, their rules imperceptible even when fully controlled. However, in his explicitly theoretical deliberations, the focus on thought production is always apparent. When in 1918 Jeanneret and Amédée Ozenfant published *Après le cubisme,* the manifesto of purism, they discussed a new attitude toward painting but their attention was primarily focused on sensations and the way they produce meaningful responses.[53] When they announce the issue of beauty, they refer to it as "the mechanism of the sensation of beauty."[54] And they discuss those mental mechanisms of art perception as Peirce would. Thus, they say that "forms and colors do not act like immediate stimulants of our visual sense, that the latter is but a simple transmitter to the brain, which confirms the quality of our sensations and which, through the complicated play of memory associations, etc., connects them to hereditary or acquired sensations. It is in this way that art moves us."[55] More directly than many others, they frame the issue of art as that of thought control and expect that "the true purist work should conquer chance and channel emotion; it should be the rigorous image of a rigorous conception" which offers "facts to the imagination."[56]

Later, after Le Corbusier and Ozenfant had separated, he continued to write about modern ways of thinking, focusing on the subject most intently in *L'Art décoratif* in the section concerning the "law of Ripolin." Mark Wigley is correct that the whiteness of walls in modern architecture represented much more than a fashion or aesthetic preference. White walls manifested the realm of attitudes, a particular way of perceiving, thinking about, and constructing the world modern people lived in. Le Corbusier frames the issue in opposition to the still-conservative character of the 1925 International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris. He presents the law of Ripolin as emblematic of a movement

that is already transforming the world. Emphasizing its progressive character, in the space of three sentences he calls it a basic, social, architectural, general architectural, and historic architectural movement.[57] Altogether, he is proposing that the whiteness of walls is synonymous with the very mental environment that admits or prevents certain thoughts. One's home, in Le Corbusier's words, is a symbolic place of thought-production, a place where one can refuse

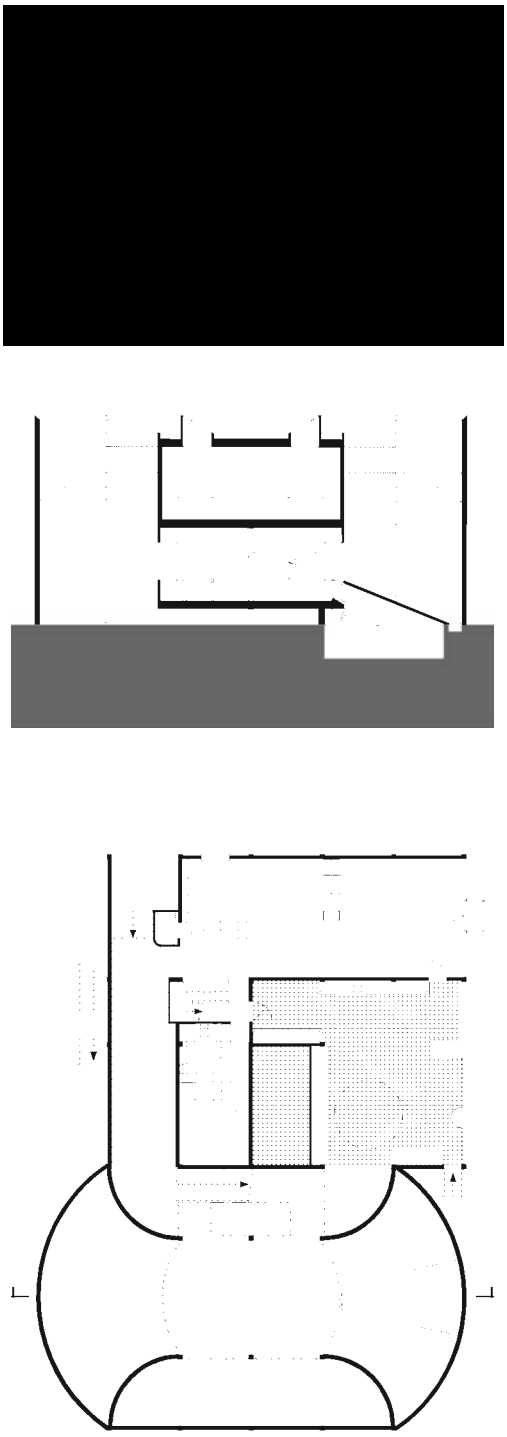
> to allow anything . . . which is not correct, authorized, intended, desired, thought-out: no action before thought . . . If the house is all white, the outline of things stands out from it without any possibility of mistake; their volume shows clearly; their colour is distinct. The white of whitewash is absolute, everything stands out from it and is recorded absolutely, black on white; it is honest and dependable. Put on it anything dishonest or in bad taste—it hits you in the eye. It is rather like an X-ray of beauty. It is a court of assize in permanent session. It is the eye of truth.[58]

The call for thinking "against a background of white" is nothing less than a plea for a deliberate and critical attitude toward deciphering and constructing meanings, a way of becoming aware of how one conceptually interacts with the modern world.[59] Moreover, Le Corbusier explicitly rejects those models of making sense that depend on stable systems of interpretation and historical patterns. He says that "without the Law of Ripolin we accumulate, we make our houses into museums or temples filled with votive offerings, turning our mind into a concierge or *custodian*."[60] As if recalling the moment when he stopped using a camera, he says that "the time is past when we can be passive beings."[61] Idlers are those who play custodians in the world populated by symbolically petrified objects and their stale narratives. Truly modern ways of thinking must be fluent, absorbent, and endlessly open to manipulation, but unlike in Victorian England, it must be consciously enhanced. Other than doing the impossible—that is, turning his own representational experiments into a system that would define how to view and construct thoughts—Le Corbusier could not argue more clearly for the new technology of thought.

As if sensing the difficulty his narratives create—the tension between the insistence on a new attitude and the inability to establish a new cohesive system of knowledge or ideology—Le Corbusier turned to architecture as the most tangible medium for engaging masses of people in this new way of thinking. His pavilion designed for the exhibition of 1925 was meant to work together with *L'Art décoratif* by materially representing his theoretical ideas. The building was deeply steeped in Victorian technologies of visuality and perception, but

at the same time it selectively contradicted that legacy. It replicated old mechanisms of shaping views, directing attention, or structuring processes of understanding, but it rejected traditional systems of artistic interpretation. It was the most explicit example of how to distill symbolic practices of the nineteenth century, how to rid one's mind of the baggage of obsolete habits while turning a built environment into a material tool for thinking modern thoughts.

The overt reason for the structure Le Corbusier designed for the 1925 International Exposition was to promote the Voisin Plan of Paris. In a highly provocative conceptual gesture, Le Corbusier proposed to raze the old fabric of Paris, roughly everything between the Seine and Montmartre, and to build in its place a grid-based system of high-rise apartment buildings surrounded by parks. Only a few historical monuments, such as the Louvre, the Place des Vosges, the Palais-Royal, and the Arc de Triomphe, would be preserved. The exhibition pavilion was equally provocative. As Figures 5.11a and 5.11c show, it consisted of two parts—a rounded element and a boxy structure called Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau.[62] Their compositional relationship was uneasy. The cylindrical container seems to be tacked on the box. Two such forms, one based on a circle and the other on a square, are generally difficult to interrelate, but here almost no effort was made to reconcile them. Also,



Figures 5.11a, 5.11b, and 5.11c

they have been treated differently in publications. In his photographic documentation of the external views, Le Corbusier foregrounded the pavilion and tended to play down or altogether hide the oval structure.[63] The two components of the pavilion played complementary roles in promoting the urban vision. The boxy Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau provided a sample of a housing cell designed for industrial reproduction. When replicated, such units would house approximately three million people in the new quarter of Paris. This prototype apartment represented the reality an inhabitant would interact with. Even when placed on the ground, not stacked vertically, it supposedly offered all the experiential and material attributes of the actual living environments proposed by the project. Interior furnishings, or rather interior "equipment" as Le Corbusier tended to call it, provided literal clues about the activities that each room supported. The unit was designed to be experienced from within and from without. The scale of its glazed elevations, and even the fact that it was surrounded by and open to vegetation, were to generally resemble conditions of the Voisin Plan.[64] In contrast, the function of the rounded exhibition hall was revealed only from within. The structure was nothing more than a traditional viewing apparatus. It cut off all connections to the outside in order to create its own visual reality. As the section and plan in Figures 5.11b and 5.11c show, it contained a set of dioramas with a platform in the center and large images posted on its perimeter walls. All viewing angles were carefully calculated, and steel balustrades guaranteed the correct position of a viewer. There was even a supplementary projector, shown in the lower part of Figure 5.11b. This space of a visual spectacle presented not the empirical experience but the total vision of the Voisin Plan.

These two structures discerned and engaged two primary ways of thinking that were characteristic of the nineteenth century. First, the material manifestation of a housing unit was grounded in the legacy of industrial production and empirical knowledge. More than a prefabricated and repeatable place for living, the apartment was a container for commonly available industrial products. Other than paintings, all objects there were either already mass-produced or designed to be mass-produced. Thus, the space shown in Figure 5.12a was similar to those of the international exhibition halls that followed the 1851 model. Le Corbusier loudly announced that the elevated house of an apartment was a repository of industrial commodities currently available for purchase in Paris. They were on display, presented against a primarily white background, with a few other colors. The living room in Figure 5.12a proposed how one would physically and mentally interact with such an environment. Practices of structuring the world of commodities discussed earlier, specifically compositions of displays at the Great Exhibition of 1851 or formal relationships of

Figures 5.12a and 5.12b

objects in a Victorian interior, continue in Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau. This time, however, the ordering of things is elevated to the level of avant-garde art. Purist paintings hanging on walls in Figure 5.12a reinforce the conceptual operations of the room. They imply how to read symbolic relationships among mass-produced objects. This modern space of habitation no longer needed old styles, those depending on correctly interpreted decorations. Rather, Le Corbusier and Ozenfant propose that the distillation—physical and intellectual—of everyday objects brings order to the material world.

The other component of the pavilion, the space of controlled vision, not only used the old technique of diorama but also referred to a broad spectrum of spectacles and epistemological operations of the nineteenth century. It was rooted in models of total vision, precedents such as the Crystal Palace or museums, which made the whole world and the passage of time visible in a physical space. Like these older models, the pavilion created a sense of symbolic suspension. Figure 5.12b shows how, in contrast to the meticulously arranged simulation of a lived-in apartment, this room is explicitly designed for a brief visit. Its articulation of structure, selection of materials, and sand-covered platform of the floor highlight its almost industrial character. The two Thonet chairs look surreal in this interior. In this visually understated environment, attention is drawn to the perimeter walls. The section (Figure 5.11b) shows how deliberately Le Corbusier controlled daylight. Following the diorama tradition, he designed the center to be much darker than spaces where large images were displayed. One of them, visible on the left side of Figure 5.12b, shows a perspectival view of the Voisin Plan as if seen from a plane flying at the level of elevated apartments. The other display wall, shown on the right side of Figure 5.12b, follows and contradicts traditional models of diorama. Its position and light intensity conform to the old pattern, but a visitor may approach the images. The wall is covered with drawings. The biggest and most central

among them is a large master plan of the project. Despite its diorama-like position, it does not even pretend to create an impression of a realistic bird's-eye view. Rather, it shows rigorously organized footprints of proposed buildings. Like Paxton's superstructure of the Crystal Palace or the rational cage of geometry in the Drawing Room counterbalanced Victorian commodities, the gridded layout of the Voisin Plan complements the housing unit as a repository of commercial goods. Altogether, this pavilion manifests a new way of establishing a total order in the commodified reality. All elements of the Victorian era are still present in this space of representation, and even people are added as docile objects of manipulation. The space of the cylindrical pavilion reveals, however, that the commercial technologies of thought became synonymous with the cerebral skill of a modern designer to create an abstract and total order of things and people.

Victorian thought engineers could not have drawn such a clear line of distinction between the realm of conceptual visions and the domain of commodities, because in their world different ways of thinking and conflicted assumptions behind them had to be fused to conceal the operations of thought manipulation. In the Paris of 1925, it was one's ability to rationally extract all mechanisms and tools of the technology of thought that defined the modern attitude. The competent knowledge of industrial technologies was necessary but insufficient to validate a modern designer. One's right to rearrange people's lives and the material world was grounded in a more abstract concept of total knowledge and control. As if asserting this progressive character of architecture in reshaping culture, the photographic documentation of the exhibition includes a photo of a visit by the French minister of culture to the diorama hall. Figure 5.13 shows Anatole de Monzie and, most likely, Le Corbusier looking at the Voisin Plan of Paris.[65] Just as scholars of the nineteenth century produced the total knowledge of, for example, a history of the natural world or the arts, the minister of culture and the architect view and produce the contemporary world. They model and consider new symbolic and material orders and holistically organize people's lives.

Such an explicit representation of control over thought and lived reality would be inadmissible in Victorian England. Nineteenth-century leaders highlighted religious beliefs and traditional value systems to hide the extent of their own practices of experimentation and control. By 1925, however, the world was ready to accept a well-designed future. The architect and the minister of culture are vividly depicted before the Voisin Plan because their presence is symbolic. They stand in shadow, their well-cut suits no doubt black, in resistance to frivolous shifts of fashion. These are the iconic masters of constructed reality. In Figure 5.13, only the details of the Voisin proposal are discernable. Modernism always projected scientific expertise and rational solutions as its outcome, but what it needed more

than anything else was a tacit, and thus unquestionable, trust in the power of those who developed new totalizing visions. People believed that the chosen few may correctly see and organize the whole world. The generally accepted notion that all thought, all meanings, and all relationships are ductile created a need for this new kind of authority. Le Corbusier constructed his own image in response to that need. Although for the next half-century, and almost everywhere, people read his theoretical assertions and students of architecture learned his famous "five points" of modern architecture, his fame was not grounded in a new cohesive system of thought. Rather, he constructed the myth of his own infallibility and artistic genius. Students of architecture have been learning little about his practices of thought manipulation.

Le Corbusier is not emblematic of High Modernism because his buildings are mostly white and their geometry is elemental. He represents High Modernism because, like the distinction between the detailed vision and the black silhouettes in Figure 5.13, he chose for us what in his production we are supposed to register and understand, and what we should trust with uncritical admiration.

Figure 5.13

Closing Remarks
The West

It may be useful to reflect more generally on the Western perspective against which the examples in this book have been analyzed. All material practices studied here revolve around the thinkability of represented concepts and the control of their meanings. Dominant powers have always laid claim to control over the way people know things, but the West seems to have been the most successful in fusing power and knowledge, its primary tool being the elimination of other, complex, or critical ways of thinking. Even the limited examples discussed here show that the other modalities of thought that European powers attempted to or did suppress shared distinctly less possessive characteristics. For instance, representing divinity in Byzantium could be seen as sharing the attitude toward religion of Mayan practices of cosmic vision. Their theological principles were clearly different. However, they must have shared the belief that verbally structured systems of interpretation are emblematic of the human desire to control symbolic reality, and that only by reaching beyond such limitations, by giving up the rational control over thoughts, can a person enter the domain of god(s). They relied on visual representation and experiential phenomena because the vagueness or richness of visual stimuli escapes the reductive character of textual interpretations. When a believer pondered the implied presence of light in the naos of the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, or while a ritualistically intoxicated priest engaged with the evocative compositions of painted books in Mesoamerica, it was a similar absence of an explicit authority of the symbolic—or the lack of an all-controlling system of interpretation— that opened up their experience to complex processes of sense-making. In both cases, instead of deciphering an already-coded message, the very process of constituting thought created a possibility of a religious meaning. What one could learn from such an experience was to a large degree unpredictable.

It is also significant that the artistic production of the Reformation dealt directly with the issue of symbolic authorities. The purpose of the so-called mannerist representations was to destabilize the dominant structures of symbolic order. Compositions in Mantua or the Commonwealth of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania discussed here encouraged critical reflection in search of new, nonhierarchical systems of social and political relationships. While representations of Byzantium or pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica identified

thoughts that are possible in the absence of a centralized authority of the symbolic, early generations of Protestants and their sympathizers used visual forms to explore alternatives to the already-existing system of control.

In all the examples discussed in this book, it was the West, or rather the forces that shaped European power elites, that silenced or dismissed other modalities of thought by rendering them unintelligible. The identity of the West has been framed by the accumulated memory of such processes and mechanisms of cultural expansion. Thus the so-called invention of the Gothic style provided the way to distill and articulate emergent structures of power in France. Their sense of superiority was fully perceivable only when considered against the relationship existing between the Roman West and the Byzantine East. The church of Saint-Denis earned its place in politics and history by taming those idiosyncratic aspects of Eastern Orthodox imagination that perturbed and fascinated the crusading elites. This new way of controlling meanings made it into what Simson called "the conservative 'language' of Christian architecture throughout the Western world," one that was still at work when it reemerged in the nineteenth century as the visual system of English national identity.[1]

The Mesoamerican experience seemed to have proven to Europeans that their superiority resided in the ability to control communication. The Spaniards remade religion, language, and education into operational tools designed for the task of cultural appropriation. To do this they had to place the content of Catholic religion in polar opposition to the means of religious communication. The meaning of religious beliefs had to become dogmatic—strictly fixed by memorized narratives—in order for the practices of message delivery to operate like promotion. The stricter the dogma, the more permissive the methods of attracting potential believers. When thousands of Amerindians gathered in the Catholic theaters of conversion, the Spaniards thought that they moved them away from their pre-Hispanic beliefs. Without the Spaniards knowing it, the strategy failed in Mesoamerica but, when enhanced and imported back into Europe (or perhaps in a reciprocal process of exchanges, such as the example of Diego Valadés's *Rhetorica Christiana*), it produced one of the greatest successes of the Catholic Church—the Counter-Reformation.

In Europe, as in the Americas, the mission of the centralized power was to appropriate the way of thinking of the rebellious others. The Jesuits' use of spectacle to silence the critical thoughts of religious reformers was rooted in the same polar opposition between the means of delivery and the religious content that Spanish friars had practiced in Mesoamerica. Baroque—the artistic expression of this strategy—was ultimately acknowledged as one of the greatest achievements of European civilization.

Victorian England reinforced and expanded that model of operation. To a large extent, the technologies of symbolic thought that emerged in the nineteenth century followed earlier practices. The dual character of processes sustaining the commercial disintegration of thought is not that different from the mechanisms employed by the Counter-Reformation. Language, especially in the form of religious narratives and social conventions, secured the notion that transcendental values are always safeguarding the integrity of high culture. Once again, this permitted tacit but unbounded experimentation with representations, this time exploring the commercial ductility of thought and perception. Never before, however, was the distinction between verbal structures and the dynamic logic of representational practices so great and commonly exercised. Gradually, the forces of capitalism dissolved any need for traditional hierarchies or axioms. The impression of the stable value system was indispensable in doing exactly the opposite: destabilizing both the old and emergent symbolic structures.

Western consumer society emerged as grounded in the distinction between the extreme visibility of the illusion of stability, be it of religious beliefs, cultural distinctions, gender roles, or epistemological assumptions, and the unbounded but imperceptible ductility of the actual practices of symbolic thought. These processes became invisible to consumers and nothing was immune to them. Ways of thinking that were different from the European modality of thought were made to appear merely exotic—useful only for entertainment or commercial promotion.[2] Everything, from material things to the knowledge of the world and its history, was open to commodification—turned into objects or instruments of commerce. The conflicted character of reality they produced was imperceptible when concealed by the practices of denial discussed here. High Modernism took full advantage of this mode of operating when its leaders exercised unprecedented control over thoughts. Architects like Le Corbusier learned from advertisers or film directors how to shape people's imagination. His way of operating became totally imperceptible when he managed to construct the myth of his own artistic genius and rational infallibility. His vision of the progressive West appeared superior in ways escaping analysis or criticism.

High Modernism ended when the operations of its artistic, political, and economic leaders, like Le Corbusier, became perceivable again. People began to clearly see that the modern movement and the international style—its emblematic expression—manifested an unscrupulous attitude toward lived reality. Critics called the assumptions behind modern architecture dogmatic and driven by the alignments among planners, political powers, and capital. Others observed that the emerging global market was expanding operations of capitalism far beyond its Fordist models. Fredric Jameson, for example,

in his *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* equated postmodernism with "the consumption of sheer commodification as a process."[3] These critiques were produced primarily in the humanities and resulted in the array of so-called postmodern theories, which problematized the commodification of thought and perception. They looked critically into the production of meanings in historiography, mass media, politics, and the practices of everyday life to generally question the relationship between power and knowledge. Yet it seems paradoxical that the very term "postmodern" was initially popularized by Charles Jencks in his *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*.[4] While the new theories were intellectually progressive and studied previously silenced aspects of cultural phenomena, Jencks's book was nostalgic and regressive. Writing in the mid-seventies, Jencks seems to have been unaware of the breadth of the new intellectual efforts underway in the humanities and social sciences and instead identified postmodernism as a new architectural style. His book seems like it emerged from a time capsule—as if for him the Victorian era never ended. While seemingly overcoming the international style in architecture, he actually attempts to restore the nineteenth-century mindset, in which commercial experimentation could hide behind a system of proper narratives. He insists on establishing the "language of architecture," a concept like the one that guided John Ruskin's didactic aspirations when he debated the national style. Jencks foregrounds literal interpretations as the intellectual goal of designing and knowing architecture and promotes associative and syntactical relationships in meaning production. Moreover, sounding like a direct disciple of Beresford Hope, he openly argues for a "radical eclectism" of styles.[5] He praises decoration, literalness in symbols, narrative-driven orders, and the vitality of commercial experimentation in designing architecture. In the final chapter devoted to the beginnings of the postmodern style, he discusses architecture as a manifestation of true inclusivity, which in his view is similar to the symbolic inclusivity of tragedy, arguing that an inclusive building

> does not sublimate unattractive aspects of the world. It can include ugliness, decay, banality, austerity, without becoming depressing. It can confront harsh realities of climate, or politics without suppression . . . The extraordinary power of tragedy when it is really tragic, or inclusive architecture when it really unifies disparate material, is its disinterested fulfillment. The particular motivation or "interests" of men are momentarily dropped as they watch a configuration of particularly disturbing events unfold—murders, betrayals, slow disintegration—they watch these monstrosities with detached pleasure, as long as they are balanced or reconciled within an overall tragic pattern.[6]

This notion of an overall pattern is analogous to the system of proper narratives that "balanced or reconciled" the conflicted character of commercial reality by protecting the impression that market-driven experiments in the *Illustrated London News* entertained readers without disintegrating traditional value systems; to the structure of the Crystal Palace, or more specifically the principles of technology it manifested, which provided a psychological safety net when people reached the state of sensory overload in the space of the Great Exhibition; and to God's order, which permitted "the pleasures of strong, even violent emotion" associated with parasitical sublimity in Ruskin's theories.[7] Jencks was in the process of restoring not only the rhetoric but also the practices of denial of Victorian England.

The acceptance by postmodern theoreticians across the humanities and social scientists of Jencks's term for a regressive architectural style as the label for their new intellectual ideas reflects a tacit acknowledgement that the style represented thoughts and tendencies that scholars in other disciplines could not ignore but were not ready to fully decipher. While postmodern critics uncovered uncharted complexities in colonial history, gender relationships, or the production of knowledge, the so-called postmodern architects trivialized such analyses and instead, unselfconsciously, revealed what motivated the most common interest in nonmodern ideas—the drive to again disguise the capitalist mode of operation.[8] That hidden reason might have intrigued those who had studied Western politics and cultural history. *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture,* in its capacity not only to criticize the international style in architecture but also to refocus ways of knowing lived reality, must have resonated with newly uncovered patterns in the colonial and commercial history of the world. After all, Jencks's ambitions and epistemological assumptions were quintessentially Western.

By 1980, he pronounced a "new consensus," officially declaring that the reign of the international style had ended.[9] This added urgency to the unspoken agreement among architects and architectural educators to resurrect the attitudes of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, to restore the naive enthusiasm for the commodified world and uncritical appreciation for ductility of thought. Designers and schools of architecture, especially those in the United States, sensed how radical such a restoration of old ways of thinking and discourses could be. While some architectural theoreticians, especially those better informed about critical theories, attempted to problematize the postmodern condition within the discipline of architecture, mainstream architectural discourses continued the process of hiding the fact that building programs, design ideas, and generally the knowledge of architecture were deeply implicated in the consumer culture. Architects and their clients needed a system of narratives similar to the proper narratives of the *Illustrated London News*

or Ruskin's notion of an unquestionable God's order to divert or eliminate cultural or political criticism. And thus attempts to mystify meaning production became rampant. Conferences such as the 1990 ACSA Conference on "Architecture: Lamp or Mirror?" explicitly revisited Victorian issues and attitudes. Texts about metaphoric thinking, poetics of order, myths, or genius loci permeated architectural classes and design studios. Building programs became narrative- rather than function-driven. The notion that a building can be read like a text worked equally well for education and commercial promotion, but for architectural explanations to reach the unquestioned status of dominant narratives required a new system of absolute and universal meanings—transcendental prototypes and essential symbols. Consequently, typologies of buildings and the origin of their meanings were elevated to the status of timeless issues again. Phenomenologically loaded words, such as "dwelling," helped designers redefine the spiritual purpose of architecture but also to highlight the poetic notion of programming.

While architecture fashioned after, for example, the writings of Italo Calvino appealed to young designers, narratives of gender theories or postcolonial discourses could not generate such evocative forms, and thus critical theories appeared more and more esoteric within architectural curricula. At the same time, computer graphics entered the scene as commercial images had entered the world of the nineteenth century—unrestrained and inherently intriguing. The logic of newly mystified consumer culture found its way back to architectural discourses on an intimate level when, for example, the feelings and bodily experiences of the consumer of architecture were presented as embodying the ultimate mode of knowing built environments. Such understanding was as attractive as it was egocentric. The world was fragmented again—a kaleidoscopic collection of meaningful signs and personal interests.

The heavy-handed symbolism and literal meanings of the so-called PoMo architecture, especially in its American version, succeeded in covering up the operations of capitalism. The appetite for critical theories ended. Gradually, cross-disciplinary studies of built environments became too cumbersome for young architects to engage with. In the United States, the wave of political and religious conservatism—a successful attempt to build the regressive trends into power relationships—was mirrored in the strictly professional focus of architectural education devoid of critical and theoretical import. PoMo did not succeed as the dominant style because it was only meant to shift the modality of thought. Its awkward excesses of symbolic expression associated explicit construction of architectural meanings with cartoonish forms of expression. Moreover, by trivializing critical attitudes and insightful understanding of the relationships among architecture, politics, and culture, it

created an appetite for theoretically unselfconscious expression and what Rem Koolhaas calls junkspace—a condition that "depends on the central removal of the critical faculty in the name of comfort and pleasure."[10]

The regressive way of thinking succeeded completely with the advent of the new postcritical mindset. A new breed of postcritical architects contributed to this trend most evidently when the rationale behind their projects was reduced to aesthetic considerations and their conceptual reasoning to good intentions. Architectural discourses made it easier than it had been for many years to design buildings around populist worldviews, idealistic programs, or digital forms supported by the technologies of rapid prototyping and parametric form manipulation. As critical theories became synonymous with cynicism, the Victorian tradition appeared trustworthy again. The most apparent architectural attributes of this legacy, such as thinking about a building's "skin" as the field of symbolic and aesthetic inscriptions, attracted masses of clients now favoring pattern-decorated surfaces. As in the nineteenth century, architecture could again consist of discrete elements and design attributes as long as somebody could properly explain/interpret each and every one of them. As a consequence, even the most difficult issues, such as sustainability, could be dealt with by simply developing a predetermined list of relevant architectural decisions, such as those constituting the so-called "green building." The reduction of complex societal, cultural, political, and environmental issues to a list of technical problems was also made possible because, in this resurrected world, the redemptive status of technology was fully restored. As if postmodern criticism had never existed, clients of architectural services came to expect that all concerns of the world could be reduced to problems that could be solved by technical means.

Although new buildings looked different from those designed more than a century earlier, the fact that the culture of consumerism shaped architectural ideas and perceptions continued to be hidden in the same way as in the nineteenth century. The postcritical mindset was most successful when it eliminated even the need to consider the complexity of cultural practices and political relationships that constituted lived reality. And it seems no coincidence that many surveys of contemporary architectural theories were published at the end of the twentieth century, stabilizing the intellectual field of architecture by implying that critical and interdisciplinary discourses represented already-completed projects. Postcritical students of architecture, like good consumers, might try on any viewpoint without risking their own sense of self. Those students knew that, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, declaring good intentions about helping communities or saving the environment was sufficient to justify a design idea. Narratives like those provided comfort

because they made the actual phenomena of capitalism appear esoteric and unthinkable. The same mechanisms of thought production that had erased the Byzantine modality of thought from Western perception and removed political criticism from religious representations during the Counter-Reformation were still operating and they disseminated the Western attitude globally.

Critical theories undoubtedly lost their momentum in architecture but, just as in Mesoamerica at the time of colonization, the process of engagement with the forces of capitalism continues in a tacit manner. The representational testing of the emergent system continues wherever people transform space and matter to explore new relationships and concepts of reality. Just as before, places where people accept the new reality on the level of daily practices produce the most interesting array of representational tests. Great metropolises such as Lagos, Nigeria, or Mexico City work as inexhaustible urban laboratories where people constantly rethink their environment as a representation of an ever-changing set of relationships and dependencies.[11] They accept any material or social solution as relevant as long as it helps them to survive. Like architects treat conceptual drawings and models, the poorest communities treat their physical environments as works in progress. They engage with forces of capitalism not by critically theorizing about them but rather by practically teasing out what power or capital have discarded as marginal or irrelevant. Such urban syncretism reveals difficult-to-predict aspects of globalization.

Hopefully, this book shows a way to study these insufficiently explored cultural phenomena. Mechanisms that have concealed some of the key exchanges and relationships in Western history are not entirely resistant to insight. A more complex view of the world will emerge if traditional epistemology is augmented by this new way of exploring the relationships between thought and material production.

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Notes

Introduction

1. Marxist art theories and literary studies have identified similar issues but associated them with determinism of social or political processes. Raymond Williams, for example, discusses structures of feelings as "affective elements of consciousness" that could either explicitly manifest existing social structures or be a part of "a social experience which is still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating." He also says that "the idea of a structure of feelings can be specifically related to the evidence of forms and conventions—semantic figures—which, in art and literature, are often among the first indications that such a new structure is forming." Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132–3. Following Williams's notion of "structures of feelings," Edward Said proposed a similar concept of verbal "structures of attitude and reference," the formation of which he identified as essential in the processes of colonization. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Random House, 1994), 52.

2. Esther Pasztory asserts that material objects of art were essential in thinking new ideas. Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things: Toward a New Vision of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

3. Even those, like William Whyte, who see built environments as a medium of communication, acknowledge that architecture "remains remarkably under-theorized" and its interpretations have suffered from a variety of reductive and logocentric practices. See William Whyte, "How Do Buildings Mean? Some Issues of Interpretation in the History of Architecture," *History and Theory* 45 (May 2006): 153–77.

4. Louise Pelletier, *Architecture in Words: Theatre, Language and the Sensuous Space of Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

5. Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyene say, for example, that the UK system of architectural services and education is grounded in the superficial belief that "what constitutes an architect is well defined, and the problems the professional encounters are assumed to be well stated." Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyene, *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 89.

6. According to Iain Borden and Jane Rendal, this superficiality of approach has been instilled by architectural education. Citing an unnamed master, they say that "those who [are] invested in thinking theoretically could never be architects." Multiple examples challenge such an assertion, many dating from the last quarter of the twentieth century, from the time before the postcritical mood dominated the market of architectural services. The fact remains that the architectural profession is frequently understood as an unselfconscious craft and architecture as "what the architect does." Iain Borden and Jane Rendal, "From Chamber to Transformer: Epistemological Challenges and

Tendencies in the Intersection of Architectural Histories and Critical Theories," in Iain Borden and Jane Rendal eds., *InterSections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 3–4.

7. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), 194, 195–228. Foucault discusses how a particular type of building, the Panopticon design by Jeremy Bentham, marks the transition in the way individuals related to society and its power structures, how the prison transformed an individual into a visible "object of information" controlled by omnipresent and invisible power.

8. Henri Lefebvre sees architecture as a constructed social space, which serves when "hegemony makes use of it." Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 11. Denis Hollier, while discussing ideas of Georges Bataille, makes a similar assertion that architecture is an oppressive space of representation. Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

9. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Methuen: New York and London, 1987), 77–78.

10. The notion of thinkability was problematized by Theodor Adorno in *Negative Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1973 [1966]) in his discussion of its opposite, the concept of unthinkability, specifically unthinkability of death and despair. I am using it here in a sense of cultural thinkability, which is related to what Kenneth Surin studied as synonymous with the cultural specificity of thought. He says, for example, that "every culture generates for itself its own 'thinkability' (and concomitantly its own 'unthinkability' as the obverse of this very 'thinkability'), and its concepts are constitutive of that 'thinkability.'" Kenneth Surin, "On Producing the Concept of a Global Culture," in V. Y. Mudimbe, ed., *Nations, Identities, Cultures*, special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94 (1995): 1179–99, 1183.

11. Andrew Ballantyne, "Architecture as Evidence," in Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut, and Belgin Turan Özkaya, eds., *Rethinking Architectural Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2006), 41.

12. Two concepts, representation and symbolism, play a special role in this study. Commonly, both apply to the same realm of issues and their application tends to overlap. In this book, however, they help make a critical distinction. Symbolism, or the act of symbolizing, refers here to the semiotic model of constituting and transmitting messages. Because it emphasizes the systematic formation of signs, coding of meanings, and transmission of messages, symbolism emphasizes processes of the conscious communication of the symbolic. In contrast, representation, or the act of representing, identifies practices that are not necessarily systematic or linguistically framed and refers here primarily to processes of shaping thought in a nonverbal way.

13. That is probably why Snodgrass and Coyene can say that "architecture is at its core interpretational when designers appear to be making difficult decisions." *Interpretation in Architecture*, 4.

14. The process in which knowledge emerges when a building is being designed may be seen as analogous to the emergence of discursive formations. See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York, Pantheon 1972), 106–13. This architectural practice, however, is local and primarily synchronic and also differs from other disciplines in the way nonverbal modes of thought are essential for refining its conceptual statements.

15. Consider, for example, ethnoscape, the shifting conditions that Arjun Appadurai discusses in *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 33.

16. Andrew Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy: Repetition, Function, Alterity* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), 125.

17. This distinction between observable phenomena and normative thought may be seen as analogous to the distinction that Michel Foucault makes in *Discipline and Punish*, 183.

1. Architecture and Medieval Modalities of Thought

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1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), 50.

2. Otto von Simson, for example, says that "the Gothic cathedral, the expression of that order [the intellectual order of the Middle Ages], is intact and in use today." Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order in Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), xiv.

3. Robert Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

4. Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: NAL Penguin, 1951).

5. Ibid., 31–32, 64.

6. See, for example, his treatment of the relationships between mysticism and nominalism in the late Middle Ages (Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, 14–15).

7. For example, Liz James, while studying color and light in Byzantium, in many ways acknowledges the insufficiency of the current knowledge of Byzantine art. In some cases she finds that scholarly discourses reveal a "considerable misunderstanding of the nature of Byzantine descriptions of art." See James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 112. More generally, she assesses that a "desire for fixed order, for a scheme into which everything fits neatly, is a legacy of nineteenth-century scholarship and the 'scientific' cast of mind, in which nothing is valid unless defined and categorized. But Byzantium was a society in which multiple references and associations were keenly appreciated, and limitations of category avoided" (107).

8. I see the issue of representation as central in the explorations of medieval architecture and the discontinuities in medieval cultures. See Stephen G. Nichols, "The New Medievalism: Tradition and Discontinuity in Medieval Culture," in *The New Medievalism*, ed. Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 1–2, 22.

9. The history of philosophical considerations concerning the symbolic functioning of depiction has been acknowledged as important for contemporary cultural theories. See, for example, Gilles Deleuze, "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," in *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Voundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 253–79; see also Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988), 170. Contemporary technology may also be seen in that historical context. Digital technology, when it reduces reality to information that can be coded numerically, for the first time in history creates the possibility of a perfect copy, an absolute duplicate.

10. Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1992.) The issue of various modes of perception and their symbolic roles in Byzantium was also discussed by Robert S. Nelson in his "To Say and to See: Ekphrasis and Vision in Byzantium," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 143–68.

11. Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 7.3, col. 872A, 108–9. Emphasis added.

12. Ibid., 1.1, col. 588B, 49.

13. Ibid., 1.1, col. 588C-D, 589A, 50.

14. See the discussion of "poetic imagery" in Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 2.1, col. 137B, 148; see also the discussion of light, 205.

15. Barasch, *Icon*, 163; Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," 2.1, col. 373A-C, 197.

16. Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," 2.5, col. 401A, 206.

17. Barasch, *Icon*, 167; Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," 2.3, col. 397C; 2.1, col. 376B, C, 198–9; also, 1108A, B, 284.

18. Barasch, *Icon*, 167.

19. Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," 2.3, col. 397C, 204–5.

20. Ibid., 2.3, col. 400B, 205.

21. Ibid. Pseudo-Dionysius says that God "grant[s] the beneficent rays of its own light to whoever views it with the eyes of the intelligence."

22. The political dimension of visual certainty during iconoclasm was discussed by Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200–1000* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 248.

23. Pope Gregory the Great on the didactic function of images in Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Estetyka Średniowieczna*, vol. 2 of *Historia Estetyki* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1988), 99. Greek and Latin with English translation in Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics*, 3 vols., ed. Cyril Barrett (The Hague: Mouton, 1970–74), 105. St. John of Damascus expressed a similar opinion in *On the Divine Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), Apology I. 17, 25.

24. Edward James Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (New York: AMS Press, 1978), 130–45.

25. Ibid., 78. This political shift is not that different from how contemporary knowledge of the iconoclastic controversy is constituted. Though the visual form and its meanings were central to this

controversy, the way we know it is mostly based on information that survived in writing and is almost exclusively about theological, political, or military issues. Neither Edward James Martin's text of 1930, nor Moshe Barasch's of 1992, presents any images that could illustrate the cultural and ideological phenomenon of the iconoclastic controversy. As Anne Middleton noted, medieval discourses are primarily based on literary studies and even contemporary poststructural critical methods tend to "reduce all historical phenomena [of the Middle Ages] to purely linguistic events."Anne Middleton, "Medieval Studies," in *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn (New York: MLA Publication, 1992), 20–21. Indeed, current epistemological concepts frequently privilege verbal explorations and underestimate the specificity of significatory practices built into material forms. This poses a particular problem for studies of Byzantium where, in the words of James, "the relationship between visual and verbal . . . is less one of commentary than of parallel function and physical accompaniment." James, *Light and Colour,* 118.

26. Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, 241.

27. Ibid., 189, 247. Pseudo-Dionysius was also part of a cross-cultural environment. Generally, exchanges between the Byzantine empire and centers of the Islamic world seemed to have been common. For example, James emphasized that the Byzantines not only exported tesserae (glass cubes used for making mosaics) to the Islamic world, but that Byzantine craftsmen were imported for the construction of the Great Mosque in Damascus and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. James, *Light and Colour*, 21–22. Buildings like Capella Palatina in Palermo show that these exchanges were mutual. In that church, next to Byzantine decorations, a visitor may find honeycomb ceiling patterns, characteristic of Muslim architecture.

28. St. John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, Apology I. 16, 23–24; II. 14, 61.

29. Ibid., I. 22, 31.

30. Ibid., III. 12, 72; I. 8, 18.

31. Ibid., II. 5, 53.

32. Ibid., III. 12, 72.

33. Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Brothers, 1976), 13.

34. This interpretation has been used in the history of Byzantine art. See, for example, James Snyder, *Medieval Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 4th–14th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 150–51.

35. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, 15.

36. Ibid., 15–16.

37. Ibid., 35.

38. Demus discusses the figurative attributes of mosaics and explains their placement and size as being consistent for a practical reason—to ensure that the distance and the angle of view within the physical space of a church will provide correct proportions and good visibility of the figures. However, Cyril Mango and Ernest J. W. Hawkins observed a very different logic. Some mosaics, for example, the Virgin in the apse of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, were not designed to be seen correctly from the floor; actually the privileged point of view was below the crown of the semidome,

physically inaccessible to a person. (Noted in James, *Light and Colour,* 2, and Nelson, "To Say and to See," 149.)

39. Thomas F. Mathews "The Sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine Church Decoration," *Perkins Journal* 41 (July 1988): 11–21, 19.

40. Figurative representation can be seen as grounded in the Aristotelian concept of imitation of nature and Plato's process of doubling.

41. Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names," 1.9, col. 916A, 118.

42. As Demus notes, we unfortunately have no complete and homogenous decorations of the ninth or even tenth century. Many church decorations were destroyed or altered at the time of iconoclasm. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, 54. See also a similar comment in Carolyn Loessel Connor, *Art and Miracles in Medieval Byzantium: The Crypt at Hosios Loukas and Its Frescoes* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 68.

43. Ibid., 82. Although many historians believe that the Katholikon was built in 1025, Connor, in her study of the crypt at Hosios Loukas, suggests that it was built earlier, between 956 and 970. There are two churches in the monastery of Hosios Loukas: Panagia church and the Katholikon. In this chapter, I refer exclusively to the Katholikon.

44. The symbolic function of the material remains of Saint Luke can be seen as related to the teachings of Saint John of Damascus. The emergence of this cult was discussed in Connor, *Art and Miracles in Medieval Byzantium*, 96.

45. Cyril Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (Milan: Electa Editrice, 1978), 124.

46. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, 44. It seems important to note that, by associating what he calls "magical realism" with oriental influences, Demus effectively placed this "exotic" symbolic phenomenon outside of his system of interpretation (43–44).

47. A squinch is an architectural term that signifies a transition between a dome and two intersecting walls. Its material form is in the shape of a niche consisting of two vertical perpendicular surfaces merging into a small half-dome at the top. The naos, in the tradition of Byzantine sacral architecture, was the place of liturgy combining the centrally located large volume of space and the sanctuary.

48. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, 23. Although Demus's observations were made about mosaics in Daphni, they apply to the similar mosaic at Hosios Loukas shown in the illustration.

49. Ibid., 23–24.

50. Robert S. Nelson, in his "Spaces of Devotion in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts," a paper presented at the Twenty-First International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, 2006, discussed how images painted on opposite pages of manuscripts interacted and thus constituted a similar sense of sacred space.

51. The term "sacralized space" was used by Robert S. Nelson to describe space "consecrated by images through the sense of vision." Nelson, "To Say and to See," 157–58.

52. The bema, in the tradition of Byzantine sacral architecture, was the slightly raised part of a church containing the altar.

53. The only such rectangular opening on the ground floor is located in the treasury, a room that was always disconnected from the rest of the interior.

54. As I will discuss, in some cases, for example on the south side, the top part of the gallery balustrades might be missing. In places where stone balusters stick above the balustrade panels, they show traces that something was attached to them, for example a perforated element like that above the gate to Prothesis. Such an element would have hidden small fragments of the gap windows that can be seen from the north end of the floor of the naos today. They would also soften the edge of the volume of bright light entering the naos from southern openings.

55. Robert Weir Schultz and Sidney Howard Barnsley, *The Monastery of Saint Luke of Stiris, in Phocis* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 25–26. They also referred to a similar solution existing in the cathedral of Torcello, near Venice.

56. Ibid., 25. According to information given to me by the employees of the Archeological Museum of the Hosios Loukas monastery, no samples of any original glass used in the screens survived to our times.

57. Ibid.

58. Robert Ousterhout suggests that, generally, window apertures in old buildings were much smaller than those reconstructed according to recent conservation practices, and this fact is to be "an important consideration in understanding the effect of natural light on the Byzantine interior." Ousterhout, *Master Builders*, 151.

59. The very construction of tesserae, a basic unit of mosaics made of colored glass and placed on the background of a different color or having a gold leaf inserted between layers of glass, would make mosaics appear similar to the glazing of windows. In both cases—a piece of glass mounted in a window screen and thick tesserae—light would bounce against and lighten optical imperfections within or on the surface of glass. Glazing of the window screens might have then continued what Paul the Silentiary and Procopius identify as the main purpose of aniconic mosaics in Justinian's Hagia Sofia, that is, according to M. L. Fobelli, "'spreading' light, so as to avert the perception of surface as a boundary to space." Maria Luigia Fobelli, "Light and Lighting in Justinian's Hagia Sophia in Constantinople," a paper presented at the Twenty-First International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, 2006. Also it is noteworthy that a light condition in which different sources of light, such as a screen window and a spot of direct light admitted through multiple perforations, appear to have similar intensity can be found frequently in Islamic architecture.

60. Schultz and Barnsley, *Monastery of St. Luke*, 25.

61. References to these kinds of phenomena existed in historical Byzantine texts but they have been overlooked as representational attributes. These texts start to reveal their complexity only in the latest explorations of perceptual phenomena in Byzantium. Consider, for example, the following fragment of Rhodios's description of the no-longer-existing Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople: "the building is beautiful because of the light-bearing nature of the stones and metals" (lines 645–46). James observes that "terms such as gold-gleaming (*χρυσαυγής*) and translucent (*διαυγής*) are common [in that original description] and serve to emphasize the effect of light on marble, in particular the gleaming play of that light." James, *Light and Colour*, 113. In the context of my findings, it is likely that Rhodios associated beauty with the ways material surfaces emanate light, that is, with the translucency of stones, their ability to literally bear light inside of material fabric, and with the reflectivity of metals like gold.

62. Such data included photographic documentation of visible surfaces and their color value relative to the gray scale. To model light distribution, I used a no-longer-available physically based software, Lightscape 3.2, designed for lighting engineers and architects. It calculates the dispersion of light energy within a given geometry, according to assigned optical characteristics of materials, and provides the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of such a process.

63. The light in this image was calculated for nine in the morning on March 21.

64. In places where direct sunlight was not likely to reach, vertical white-stucco-covered surfaces were smaller than those close to windows.

65. The digital model has another unique feature: its interior surfaces are covered with photographs of actual stone finishes still existing in the Katholikon. These photographically based texture maps are relatively accurate because their appearance was adjusted to eliminate reflections and specular light in a photograph. The picture simulates appearances for approximately the same time of year and day when the photograph of Plate 2a was taken.

66. Finishes of the gallery wall in the model are not accurate graphically but they approximate optical characteristics of the original finishes. Instead of recreating the original painted forms, these surfaces have been texture-mapped with a pattern averaging photographic documentation of the remaining finishes. Consistently painted surfaces might have appeared even darker.

67. Paradoxically, the picture shows that the space of the bema is so bright today that the effect of gleaming is reversed—the panel closing the niche delicately gleams light into the gallery space.

68. They lived in the fourth century and their ideas were important for the iconoclastic controversy. Athanasius is known for his battle against Arianism, a controversy that revolved around the symbolic materiality of the Son of God, and whether the Son was from the Father as a light from a light. Gregory of Nazianzus's thoughts concerning light and color were frequently disputed in Byzantium, especially during iconoclasm. See James, *Light and Colour*, 133–34. References to a similar symbolic phenomenon of a glowing figure can be found in the story of the life of Saint Luke. In one instance, the vision of the saint's body "gleaming wondrously" and "seen entirely as light" is juxtaposed against the limitedness of judgment based on the appearances of things. Carolyn Loessel Connor and Walter Robert Connor, *The Life and Miracles of Saint Luke of Steiris: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Orthodox Press, 1994), chapter 63, 103–5.

69. See, for example, Nano Chatzidakis, *Hosios Loukas: Byzantine Art in Greece*, general ed. Manolis Chatzidakis (Athens: Melissa Publishing House, 1997), 18, or more general remarks by Snyder, *Medieval Art*, 149.

70. Procopius, *Buildings*, trans. H. B. Dewing (London: The Loeb Classical Library, 1915), I, i, 30–31.

71. Mathews, "The Sequel," 19.

72. One could think about Plate 3 as showing such conceptual planes made of smoke.

73. Icons of saints placed on the ground level belong to the same category. As representations of earthly beings who have been elevated by the divine benevolence, they bridge the symbolic gap. Some of them are meant to be physically touched or kissed while others are beyond one's reach.

74. James discusses the color definition and refers to Charles Mugler, *Dictionnaire historique de la terminologie optique des grecs* (Paris, Klincksieck, 1964). See James, *Light and Colour*, 49-50.

75. Ibid., 105, 109. James acknowledges that the "issue of colour symbolism is one of the areas where East and West seem to diverge. In the West, colour symbolism, even if unfixed, is made far more explicit." She also says that, whereas Byzantium is often conceived as a static world, its handling of colour suggests unexplored subtlety."

76. James says that the "word used for 'colour' itself in both Byzantine and Classical accounts is usually *χρῶμα*, but *ἄνθος* is also a common term. This can be translated as 'flower' or 'bright colour,' or as 'brightness' and 'lustre.' That such a word should mean 'colour' indicates the strength of qualities such as brightness and saturation in the perception of colour. In Greek thought, *χρῶμα* was related to *χρώς*, skin, that is, to form and surface, and to movement and change, which can be related to the shifting nature of colour. This shifting aspect is perceived as one of the qualities of colour, a positive part of the nature of colour." James, *Light and Colour,* 74.

77. Michael Psellos, living in the eleventh century, close to the time when the Katholikon was built, emphasized the shifting of color perception, distinguishing between the stable character of color itself and the dynamism in the very process of perceiving it. According to James, "this double perception of colour is a theme which recurs throughout Byzantine colour perception." James, *Light and Colour,* 76–77.

78. See Anka Stojakovic, " Jésus-Christ, source de la lumière dans la peinture byzantine," *CahCM* 18 (1975): 271 and 9, and Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," 2.3, col. 141B, 150.

79. Gold tesserae were of little use before the fourth century and thus coincide with the theological developments of Byzantium because gold represented divine light. James, *Light and Colour,* 26, 107.

80. (John 8: 11); Mathews, "The Sequel," 20. During the Twenty-First International Congress of Byzantine Studies, in his "Spaces of Devotion in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts," Robert S. Nelson discussed a similar relationship between a figurative image and nonfigurative substance in a Byzantine Eucharistic cup. In many cases, a small, round depiction of Christ was placed at the bottom of such a cup, surrounded by an inscription saying: "This is my body." Such a figurative representation and its literal interpretation implied that the Eucharistic bread was to be thought of as nonfigurative representation of Christ's materiality. Such a spatial arrangement directly relates to the way an image of Christ Pantokrator pronounced that light under the dome was nonfigurative representation of Christ's spirituality. Although formally inverted and different in scale, Byzantine Eucharistic cups and domes were representationally constituted in the same way.

81. Photius, from Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 291, cited in Nelson, "To Say and to See," 156.

82. Although theology is frequently presented as the battleground between the two powers, the difference in the degree of control over religious thought was equally important. While the church in the West steadily centralized the pope's control over the universal concept of Christian religion in all Western countries, the Byzantine church implemented the so-called principle of *autocephaly*, an administrative independence of each national church.

83. According to James, 1204 was the threshold when Byzantine symbolism started to change from one that accepted paradoxes and ambiguities, like the examples I discussed, to one foregrounding explicit and literal expressions of meaning. She says, "In the East, this explicit symbolism is a late

feature; examples tend to be from after 1204, and may well derive partially from Western influences." James, *Light and Colour*, 105–106.

84. Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, xx. The narthex of Saint-Denis was dedicated in 1140 and the choir in 1144.

85. Ibid., 135, emphasis added.

86. The west end of Saint-Denis was built in 1137–40 and the choir in 1140–44.

87. Ibid., 106.

88. Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures* (1946; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 19.

89. Ibid., 18. Panofsky emphasizes the importance of translation and commentary by John the Scot. Others see commentary written by Hugh of Saint-Victor as much more influential. See, for example, Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral,* or Grover A. Zinn Jr., "Suger, Theology, and the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition," in Paula Lieber Gerson, ed., *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986). Although the relationships between Latin Christianity and Byzantium completely deteriorated after 1204, interest in certain aspects of Dionysian ideas continued in the West long into the thirteenth century and reemerged much later.

90. Abbot Suger, quoted in Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 21.

91. Whitney S. Stoddard, *Art and Architecture in Medieval France* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 110.

92. Abbot Suger, quoted in Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 24.

93. Ibid., 22, 51.

94. As this book shows, architecture has frequently reached beyond the limitations of verbal exchanges, while Western knowledge has consistently overlooked these cultural phenomena. Regarding the relationship between the church of Saint-Denis and the Byzantine legacy, Panofsky and even his critics, such as Peter Kidson, have reduced these cultural exchanges to verbal communication and focused on the direct links, or lack of them, between the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius and Suger. See Peter Kidson, "Panofsky, Suger and St Denis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 1–17.

95. Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, 113.

96. See, for example, an elaborate reading of such visually coded messages in Ibid., 110–15.

97. Ibid., 114–15, emphases added.

98. Ibid., 115.

99. While discussing the symbolic functionality of stained-glass windows, Simson says: "The image he [Suger] had found for it [a view that the entire cosmos appears theologically like a veil illuminated by the divine light] in the stained-glass window was so obvious, so irresistible, that it was bound to impress itself upon everyone's mind. We cannot be surprised that the image was powerful enough to induce Suger to transform the entire sanctuary into a transparent cosmos." See Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, 121–22.

100. Suger recorded all of the inscriptions in his writing, and many historical studies focus primarily on these inscriptions as the most factual information about intended meanings. For Latin and English versions of these inscriptions, see Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 73–77.

101. The symbolic program of the didactic gateway at Saint-Denis is strongly connected with the symbolic meanings of stained-glass windows. They mark the beginning and the end of the learning process. See Louis Grodecki, "The Style of the Stained-Glass Windows of Saint-Denis," in Paula L. Gerson, *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium,* 273–81.

102. See Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 16, 29.

103. Suger even encouraged generous benefactors to place precious stones inside solid walls during construction.

104. Examples of Byzantine influences, from forms of painted decorations to glass technology used in enamels of Limoges, existed in France. Among the most revealing, however, are buildings like the small church Germigny-des-Prés, built in 806, originally on the plan of a Greek cross and later drastically altered, which still shows various Byzantine attributes. A mosaic in a semidome discovered in the eastern apse, for example, is undoubtedly of Byzantine origin. It represents the Ark of the Covenant in such a way that the depicted cherubims interact with empty space as religious figures did in the semidomes and squinches of the Katholikon. The central volume of space is filled with light in a way similar to the light-filled volume in the Katholikon. Also, windows in Germigny-des-Prés are filled with alabaster. Another example, the cathedral of Saint-Front in Périgueux, was probably built between 1125 and 1150, during approximately the same time as the reconstruction of Saint-Denis. It was also radically altered in the nineteenth century. It is in the shape of a Greek cross, topped by five domes, a layout resembling that of St. Mark in Venice or, according to other theories, the no-longer-existing Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

105. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 64–65.

106. Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, 133.

107. Simson says that "the school of Chartres . . . dramatized the image of the architect . . . by depicting God as a master builder." Ibid., 31.

108. Suger elaborates on the relationships between the earthly decisions of a builder and those of the Master Builder when he says: "The admirable power of one unique and supreme reason equalizes by proper composition the disparity between things human and Divine . . . Those indeed who crave to be glorified by a participation in this supreme and eternal reason often devote their attention to this continual controversy of the similar and dissimilar, and to the trial and sentence of the litigant parties, sitting on the throne of the acute mind as though on a tribunal. With the aid of loving-kindness, whereby they may withstand internal strife and inner sedition, they drink wholesomely from the fountain of the reason of eternal wisdom, preferring that which is spiritual to that which is corporeal, that which is eternal to that which is perishable . . . Thus, through communion with supreme reason and eternal bliss, they rejoice . . . in being deservedly united with the Glorious Consciousness." See Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 16, a fragment also cited in Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, 124–25.

109. Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, 136. Simson asserts also that "Pseudo-Areopagite explicitly paralleled the 'celestial hierarchy' of angels with the 'ecclesiastical hierarchy' that governs the City of God on earth. In Capetian France, the France of Suger, the ecclesiastical and political hierarchies were not distinct" (139). Moreover, "it is this [public and political] significance, beyond the purely artistic

achievement, that accounts for the extraordinary impression caused by Suger's church. Contemporaries felt immediately that it was designed as an architectural prototype" (141).

110. This roundel might have been originally located at the bottom of the sequence.

111. Michal Kobialka critically explores the changing modes of perception of the Eucharist and how these shifts in perception delimited the mode of functioning of the *Quem Quaeritis*, which is considered by many medieval historians of drama and theater to be the earliest example of medieval liturgical drama. His explorations start in 970, at the time of the Winchester Synod, which produced *The Regularis Concordia,* housing what is believed to be the *Quem Quaeritis*, and end in 1215, at the time of the Fourth Lateran Council. According to Kobialka, the constitutions of the Fourth Lateran Council (and the dogma of transubstantiation in particular) clearly enunciated the perception and function of the body of Christ in the Eucharist. That is to say, they "created a singular standard that curtailed the ongoing debates around the mode of perception of the Eucharist. Whereas the twelfth-century mystics, Hildegard of Bingen or Aelred of Rievaulx, constructed the language that manifested that which remained unsayable, invisible, and exceptional, and which formed the frontier that divided space into a private space where the mystical was housed and a place that could be accessed by those listening to the words obedient to theology, the ecclesiological approach and the standard of the Fourth Lateran Council shifted the ternary mode toward the binary discourse centering around the body of Christ in the Eucharist . . . or toward the either/or debate around 'seeing.'" Michal Kobialka, *This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 202.

112. Ibid.

113. An image of Pseudo-Dionysius exists in the Katholikon, in Diakonikon, and is among those mosaics that can be seen from the naos. It is visible in the center of Figure 1.2, for example. I think, however, that its position in the church indicated that Pseudo-Dionysius was not regarded by the builders of the church higher than other influential figures of the early history of Christianity.

114. Mathews, "The Sequel," 16.

115. When Pierre Bourdieu discusses his concept of "the educated and competent beholders" of art, he uses as a springboard Panofsky's theories of art perception. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 215–19.

2. Colonization and Symbolic Reality in Mesoamerica

1. The very concept of scholarship may preserve vestiges of assumptions dating back to medieval times, when scholarly work and theology meant the same thing. Inga Clendinnen seems to support this view: "Mexica 'beliefs' have been discussed confidently enough, but again, academics being natural theologians, usually at an unnaturally abstract pitch." Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 5.

2. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York, Harper and Row, 1987), 28.

3. See Anthony Pagden, *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico,* trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

4. One could say that in the short period between Columbus's discovery and the Cortés conquest, the modality of European thought entered into a process of change described by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970). He identified the Renaissance as a time of transition from the medieval way of thinking, which accepted the world as a repository of divine signs to be deciphered, to the thinking of the classical era, when establishing order was a matter of rational organization of perceivable material reality.

5. The right to conquer Mesoamerica was only as valid as Pope Alexander VI's right to "donate" this newly discovered continent to Spain in 1493. Anthony Pagden observed: "The Spanish Crown had a long history of anxiety over the legitimacy of its military ventures and ever since the twelfth century Castilian monarchs had sought the advice of jurists and theologians as to how to conduct, or to seem to conduct, their affairs . . . The self-styled champions of Christendom lived in constant fear of finding themselves out of favor with their God." See the Introduction to Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), xxiv.

6. See Fray Diego Durán, *The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain* (1581; New York: Orion Press, 1964) and Bernardino de Sahagún, *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain,* trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Salt Lake City: The School of American Research and the University of Utah, 1950–82).

7. Inga Clendinnen describes how, under the leadership of Diego de Landa, persecuting idolatry and religious duplicity in 1562, in only three months more than 4,500 people were tortured, resulting in 158 deaths, including at least 13 who committed suicide to avoid the interrogations. The events Clendinnen discusses paradoxically follow the dominant epistemological bias, which highlights connections between actions and motivation. In the province of Mani, in 1562, the Episcopal Inquisition implemented the ideal research environment I describe. They tried to convince Maya people to confess the truth about their actions and the reasons behind them. They tortured to obtain this information, frequently failing because the Maya could not follow the logic of the questions or they understood that the only way to communicate was to produce what their persecutors wanted. See Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquest: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 72–92. See also Fray Diego de Landa, *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest,* trans. William Gates (New York: Dover Publications, 1978).

8. Moreover, Todorov says: "Without going into detail, and merely to give a general idea (even if we do not feel entirely justified in rounding off figures when it is a question of human lives), it will be recalled that in 1500 the world population is approximately 400 million, of whom 80 million inhabit the Americas. By the middle of the sixteenth century, out of these 80 million, there remain ten. Or limiting ourselves to Mexico: on the eve of the conquest, its population is about 25 million; in 1600, it is one million." Todorov, *The Conquest,* 133.

9. While Las Casas challenged the criminal behavior of the Spaniards, he stayed within the bounds of official theological discourse. Legal recognition of basic human rights was considered a theological issue. Although as early as 1537 Pope Paul II declared that Amerindians are indeed human beings, their relationship to the Spaniards was disputed for many years. One of the most significant dialogues was that between Las Casas defending the equality of general human rights and Juan Ginés Sepúlveda arguing for natural inequality.

10. Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquest,* 113.

11. Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico, An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain: 1523–1572,* trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 36. Original title: *Conquête spirituelle du Mexique,* published as Volume XX of *Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie* by the University of Paris, 1933.

12. For that reason, the indigenous nobility legally requested from the Spanish authorities the title of *indio hidalgo* and the rights associated with it. See Matthew Restall, *Maya Conquistador* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1998), 44–45. When James Lockhart studies similar *títulos,* written in Nahua and "purporting to authenticate an altepetl's right to its territory," he says that they are "some combination of corporate ideology, special pleading, oratory, and myth." *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 410, 416.

13. Restall, *Maya Conquistador,* 34, 43. Moreover, Restall refers to Mayan documents attempting to build the conquest into traditional mythology and explain why the people of Mani accepted Spanish rule and the Catholic faith peacefully.

14. Ibid., 35. These paralegal documents tend to project a seemingly objective and indifferent account, but the book also contains translations of original texts which, like parts of the *Book of Chilam Balam of Ttizimin,* (132–33), without making literal accusations, show despair and resignation. The same tone of resigned defiance can be found in an unusual statement that *tlamatinime*, high-priests of Nahua, made in 1524 during their theological dispute with the first missionary friars. English translation quoted in Miguel León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind,* trans. Jack Emory Davis (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 63–67.

15. Restall acknowledges that his collection of texts confirms that the knowledge of history, even when written in indigenous languages, was conditioned by current politics. See, for example, Restall, *Maya Conquistador,* 44–50.

16. Ibid., 130.

17. Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001).

18. Ibid., 3.

19. Ibid.

20. Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

21. Ibid., 213–14; originally published in *Los Romances de los Señores de Nueva España,* fol. 9, v. 1, trans. by León-Portilla in "Translating Amerindian Texts," *Latin American Indian Literature* 7 (1983): 119.

22. Clendinnen, *Aztecs*, 214.

23. Ibid., 215.

24. To avoid inconsistencies, where other texts refer to Aztec or Mexica, they are called Nahua in this book. The term refers to the same ethnic group speaking Náhuatl, the traditional language of Mexico-Tenochtitlán.

25. Even if this interpretation had actually dominated the art and religion of the Nahua, Bernardino de Sahagún or Diego Durán would have deciphered some aspect of such an overarching

system. León-Portilla studied records collected by Bernardino de Sahagún to search in *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain* for philosophical and humanistic systems of thought. Although León-Portilla's template modeled after European prototypes may be questioned, many of his conclusions deserve attention. He finds that "almost diametrically opposed attitudes toward life and the universe existed side by side" in the Nahua cultures, *Aztec Thought,* 177, and this prompts León-Portilla to see statements such as "we only dream, all is like a dream,"178, as a logical explanation for these symbolic inconsistencies. Indigenous ways of thinking among the Nahua did not conform to a system. This also explains why people whom we would call artists played such an important role in their society.

26. Lockhart says that such structure "allows for two main ways of unifying a whole; one is the arrangement of similar independent parts in a satisfying symmetrical scheme, and the other is the establishment of a fixed order of rotation and succession among the parts." Lockhart, *The Nahuas,* 396. Lockhart uses both textual and visual analysis: see diagrams, 437. At the end of this thorough exploration, Lockhart calls for more interdisciplinary studies with emphasis on the history of arts, 419.

27. Clendinnen, *Aztecs*, 75.

28. León-Portilla called this kind of order a "harmony of tensions." *Aztec Thought,* 60.

29. I believe that even the shape of certain religious interiors—enclosed, tall, with a single small opening—enhanced hallucinogenic practices because they kept sacrificial fumes in high concentration and thus deprived brains of oxygen.

30. Clendinnen, *Aztecs*, 221–22.

31. Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 494.

32. Clendinnen, *Aztecs*, 232. In saying this, she follows Ángel María Garibay's concept of *difrasismo.* See Ángel María Garibay K, *Llave del Náhuatl, Colección de trozos clásicos, con gramática y vocabulario, para utilidad de los principiantes* (Mexico City: Otumba, 1940, second ed., 1961), 112; English translation quoted in León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought,* 75.

33. Dennis Tedlock, trans., *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life* (New York: Touchstone: 1985, rev. 1996), 59.

34. Ibid., 202.

35. Ibid., 203. Carla Zarebska reveals a similar practice in discussing the meanings of the Zapotec words *binigundaza* and *binigulaza*. See her introduction to Andrés Henestrosa, Francisco Toledo, and Carla Zarebska, *A Nation Scattered by the Dance* (Oaxaca: D.R., 2004, modified reprint of the 1929 edition), 45–48.

36. Clendinnen referred to the "pulse and rhythm" of formal Mayan speech. See *Ambivalent Conquest,* 137. I also believe that some characteristics of musical speech refer to what Nahua called flowery song. See Lockhart, *The Nahuas,* 394.

37. This blending of music and text has been recorded, for example, by Richard Alderson in "Rezo Por Año Nuevo," a performance of professional prayers from Chalchihuitán. "Bats'i Son [real song]: Music of Chiapas Highlands Mexico" (CD, Latitude, div. of Locust Media Ltd., 2004). These kinds of performances are common in places such as San Juan Chamula near San Cristóbal or in the highlands of Guatemala.

38. Clendinnen found in some poems a suggestion that "the processes of chant and inscription were simultaneous, the 'text' as much sung as painted." *Aztecs*, 215.

39. The issue of reproduction of pre-Hispanic images is important here. It is not coincidence that Kingsborough's copy of the Dresden Codex in Edward King Kingsborough, viscount, *Antiques of Mexico: Comprising Fac-similes of Ancient Mexican Paintings and Hieroglyphics* (London: Robert Havell, 1830–48) has long been considered a sufficient source of information for multiple scholarly studies. Unlike the image presented here, his reproduction emphasized shapes of figures. He has distorted old pictures by redrawing all figures, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, with the same line width. Just as traditional or logocentric studies assume that verbal visual messages are coded by complete figures, he dismissed the importance of thickness of lines and nuances of graphic articulation, which are essential for creating various resemblances and subtle transformations of forms.

40. Scholars distinguish two functional subcategories in almanacs, those primarily for divination and those designed for chants and invocations. Both are present in the Dresden Codex.

41. Eric Thompson discusses decipherment as a difficulty in uncovering Mayan rules of language. He also notes that "the Maya made very free use of punning in their speech and their glyphs (rebus writing)." See J. Eric S. Thompson, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex: A Maya Hieroglyphic Book* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1972), 29.

42. For a discussion of the shortcomings in studies approaching Mayan images as coded texts and how glyphs challenge traditional semiotic distinctions between iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs, see A. G. Miller, "Comparing Maya Image and Text," in William F. Hanks and Don Stephen Rice, eds., *Word and Image in Maya Culture: Explorations in Language, Writing, and Representation* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 176–88. See also Linda Schele and Peter Mathews's discussion of complexities in glyphs in *The Codes of Kings: The Language of Seven Sacred Maya Temples and Tombs* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 22.

43. For a detailed decoding of glyphs, see Thompson, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex,* 61.

44. Ibid. Thompson refers to a glyph in the T1 column, which linguistically "converts the animal into a verb."

45. See, for example, Dresden Codex, 22, 38, or 58.

46. It probably originated in the eastern or southern part of Yucatan and survived because it was a gift to the Emperor Charles V.

47. The codex must have been created or added to in the early seventeenth century, when Spaniards conquered most of the Maya lands. One of its pages contains a piece of European paper with Spanish writing on it, sandwiched between layers of indigenous bark paper. The codex probably originated in the Petén region, which was not conquered until the seventeenth century. See Michael D. Coe and Justin Kerr, *The Art of the Maya Scribe* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1997), 181. The book is currently in the collection of the Museum of the Americas in Madrid.

48. See, for example, Dorie Reents-Budet, *Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), especially 174, 183, 236, 250, 276, 284, 296.

49. Codex Borgia is one of the best examples of religious representation of the Nahua from the Tlaxcala-Puebla area. For a discussion of its symbolic content, and good photographic reproduction of all

pages, see Serge Gruzinski, *Painting the Conquest: The Mexican Indian and the European Renaissance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), 18–23.

50. León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought,* 49–53.

51. Ibid., 30, 52.

52. Tedlock, *Popol Vuh,* 38–39. The authors of *Popol Vuh* openly doubt some aspects of the stories they tell because what they say may be "just a play of words" (84).

53. Tedlock, *Popol Vuh,* 113–15. The text of *Popol Vuh* literally refers to swallowing as uniting two entities (114).

54. See Clendinnen, *Aztecs*, 123–27.

55. One of the most important discoveries that helped elucidate the network of Mayan references was that their symbolic reality related to the cyclical changes in the night sky. In *Maya Cosmos,* David Freidel, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker describe relationships between Mayan mythology and the appearance of the night sky, especially the Milky Way. *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path* (New York: Quill/William Morrow, 1993), 59–122.

56. Tedlock, *Popol Vuh,* 29. That is why, in the language of Quiché Maya, painted books were called *ilb'al*, a seeing instrument or a place to see (21).

57. Ibid., 21. See also 44 and 147.

58. The possibility of merging language and painting in the symbolic representations of Nahua has been explicitly acknowledged by Gruzinski in his commentary on a depiction of Tezcatlipoca. See Gruzinski, *Painting the Conquest*, 9. Gordon Brotherston adds mathematics to that symbolic assembly. See Gordon Brotherston, *Painted Books from Mexico* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1995), 12.

59. A backbone and intestines with umbilicus as their extension might also have been considered a snake-like creature living in a human body. Such interpretations are implied by the drawings hand-numbered as 24 and 68 in the Borgia Codex; 86, 87, and 88 in the Vatican Codex, reprinted in Kingsborough, *Antiques of Mexico,* vol. 3 (microfilm photocopy by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1978).

60. See, for example, discussion of this issue in León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought,* 113–15. Consider also the important Mayan names Heart of the Lake, Heart of the Sea, Heart of the Sky, and Heart of the Earth.

61. See Freidel, Schele, and Parker, *Maya Cosmos,* 210.

62. Patricia Rieff Anawalt has shown that elements of costumes depicted in painted books related directly to Mesoamerican clothing. See Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Indian Clothing Before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981).

63. See a similar discussion of compositional attributes in paintings of Teotihuacán in Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things: Toward a New Vision of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 128–46.

64. The degree of visual integration of architecture and costumes/symbols is well represented in the Borgia Codex in drawings hand-numbered from 69 to 76 in Kingsborough, *Antiques of Mexico.*

65. A similar sculpted nose above a doorway can still be seen in the ruins of Hochob near Uxmal.

66. Tedlock, *Popol Vuh,* 66. For a discussion of how various Mayan ceremonial centers represented the first mountains in the primordial Big Sea, see Freidel, Schele, and Parker, *Maya Cosmos,* 144–60.

67. See Schele and Mathews, *The Codes of Kings,* 43.

68. Linda Schele and David Freidel make similar observations about Tikal in *A Forest of Kings, The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya* (New York: William Morrow, 1990), 67, 197.

69. Schele and Mathews, *The Codes of Kings,* 42.

70. According to Foucault, the medieval way of thinking based on the play of four similitudes persisted in Europe until the end of the sixteenth century. Foucault discusses the function of *convenientia, aemulatio, analogy,* and *sympathy,* the four similitudes that guided people's understanding of the symbolic relationships in the world. See Foucault, *The Order of Things,* 17–25. While European similitudes or symbolic systems acquired meaning in the process of transforming observable or constructed signs into conclusive narratives, Mesoamerican modalities of thought accepted sensations and the nascent play of imagination as religiously charged.

71. Schele and Mathews discuss the symbolic entity of a mountain (*witz*) and the cave as its interior, as a key metaphor for the Maya in *The Codes of Kings,* 42–43.

72. León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought,* 63–67. (Initially recorded by Bernardino de Sahagún in 1564.)

73. John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 49.

74. Ibid., 49.

75. Ibid., 50.

76. See the beginning paragraphs of Pauline Moffitt Watts, "Hieroglyphs of Conversion: Alien Discourses in Diego Valadés's Rhetorica Christiana," *Memorie Domenicane,* n.s., 22 (1991): 405–33.

77. Ibid., 432.

78. It should not be surprising that those who had defeated Muslims militarily just before conquering Mesoamerica placed so much emphasis on logocentric practices. They used precise linguistic tools to reconquer not only the land but also the culture of the Iberian Peninsula. Among all European languages, other than the older and cross-cultural Latin, Spanish was the first to acquire a modern grammar when Antonio de Nebrija published his *Gramática de la lengua castellana* in 1492.

79. Las Casas, *A Short Account,* Introduction, xxiv–xxv.

80. Ibid., 33.

81. Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquest,* 58. Also, Medel asserted "that too many Indians still lived scattered in the bush. He therefore ordered those Indians to be gathered together 'in good and convenient places . . . in properly organized villages.'" It is ironic that the method of control recommended by Tomás Lópes Medel was not feasible in 1552 but was put into action in the early 1980s, when the government of Guatemala forced hundreds of thousands of Quiché Maya into so-called "model villages."

82. Cortés probably asked his father to arrange for immediate publication as soon as his letters reached Spain. This was why the letters were officially banned in 1527. See Anthony Pagden, Introduction to *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico,* l–li.

83. Todorov, *The Conquest,* 97.

84. Tlaxcalans were sworn allies of Cortés. The image was published in Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Descripción de la Ciudad y Provincia de Tlaxcala de Las Indias y del Mar Océano Para el Buen Gobierno y Ennoblecimiento Dellas* (Mexico City, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, 1981).

85. Watts, *Hieroglyphs,* 408–12.

86. Ibid., 427.

87. McAndrew discusses these activities in *The Open-Air Churches,* 295.

88. Watts, *Hieroglyphs*, 431.

89. McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches,* 342.

90. Samuel Edgerton suggests that open-air chapels, like that in Teposcolula, Oaxaca, still reveal that they were designed to hold portable images. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion,* 186.

91. See, for example, descriptions of such practices in Fray Augustín Dávila Padilla, *Historia de la fundación y discorso de la provincia de Santiago de México, de la Ordende Predicatores,* 1596, or Fray Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográphica descripción de la septentrional del Polo Artico de la América y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales, y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicatores de Antequera, Valle de Oaxaca* (both referenced in Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*).

92. Watts, *Hieroglyphs*, 432.

93. Ibid., 416–17. The assumption that physical technology and techniques that help to do something are free of symbolic content—that mnemotechnics are religion-neutral, for example—was pervasive and popular among religious reformers and members of traditional orders in Europe at that time. John Calvin, for example, used such techniques to construct the spatial and imaginary "true temple" discussed in note 24 of chapter 3.

94. The ways in which the Reformation and Counter-Reformation used architecture are discussed in chapter 3.

95. Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana,* translated and cited in Watts, *Hieroglyphs*, 418.

96. Watts, *Hieroglyphs*, 430–31.

97. Valadés, cited in Ibid., 427, emphasis added. See also 424.

98. Watts suggests that the images on Gante's tapestry refer specifically to the rebus alphabet. Ibid., 427.

99. Watts refers to Gerónimo de Mendieta, chapter 28, Book III of *Historia Eclesiastica Indiana,* "De diversos modos que los indios usaron para aprender la doctrina cristiana, y del ejercicio que en ella se ha tenido." Ibid., 427–28.

100. Watts, *Hieroglyphs,* 426.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., 424, emphasis added. Valadés discusses these successful techniques in the context of what missionaries observed about the use of "amazing and unusual figures" in traditional ceremonies. Ibid., 423.

103. Variations on this way of representing the layered order of the world may be found in many churches in Mexico. Some of the most spectacular examples are in the Franciscan church of Puebla, Puebla, and at the entry to the Dominican church in Oaxaca, Oaxaca.

104. A similar image in *Rhetorica Christiana* is a diagram of administrative dependencies in the Spanish system of civil order. In an ascending progression, it shows a family, with the father and mother exercising power of control over the children, then, among others, a regional governor, and finally the emperor at the top.

105. George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and Other American Dominions, 1500 to 1800* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1959), 75–78.

106. In Spain, from the reign of Philip III onward, sculpture is almost entirely religious. See Ibid., 144.

107. Kubler and Soria, *Art and Architecture*, 171.

108. Ibid., 144.

109. With a photograph, Eliot Porter and Ellen Auerbach illustrate how the figures of Christ "can be placed in various positions for the reenactment of the Stations of the Cross." See their *Mexican Celebrations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), Figure 54.

110. Watts, *Hieroglyphs*, 424.

111. Decorations in Santa Mariá in Tonantzintla were developed between 1690 and 1730 (that is, long after Diego de Landa's persecution of religious duplicity in Yucatan and the official investigation of manuals of religious instruction). The "synod of 1555, presided over by the Bishop and Apostolic Inquisitor, Alonso de Montúfar, decided that the *doctrinae*—manuals used by the missionaries to instruct the Indians in Christianity—be systematically examined to assure their orthodoxy. In addition, works written by missionaries in indigenous languages were to be scrutinized for content and accuracy of translation, and for possible infiltrations by Indian religions." Watts, *Hieroglyphs*, 432. The space of representation in Tonantzintla could always evade such logocentric scrutiny.

112. As I discuss in chapter 3, they appropriated subversive practices of mannerism by increasing visual complexity of perceptual forms while eliminating the possibility of a critical attitude.

113. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 162–69, 171.

114. See Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 40–43.

115. Ibid., 69–70. Other studies show that traditional symbolic practices were associated with witchcraft. For example, Cecelia F. Klein, in her discussion of Aztec and Spanish depictions of witches, cited information that priests in colonial Mexico associated hallucinatory states of mind with satanic practices. C. F. Klein, "Wild Woman in Colonial Mexico: An Encounter of European and Aztec Concepts of the Other," in Claire Farago, ed., *Reframing the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 259, 339.

116. A similar spatial choreography was prepared for processions in walled-in outdoor spaces of convents.

117. When the Spaniards imposed restrictions on indigenous clothes, they regulated, for example, the use of glittering gold-like thread and overlooked the figurative ambiguities of decorations.

118. Quiché Maya is one of the two Mayan ethnic groups that rose to power in the late postclassical period, from 1200 to the conquest. The other was the kingdom of Mayapán in Yucatán.

119. Tedlock, *Popol Vuh*, 27.

120. The only surviving copy of *Popol Vuh* was translated into Spanish in Chichicastenango around 1702 by a friar, Francisco Ximénez. (Ibid.) The manuscript might have been in possession of the members of Cauec and Lord Quiché lineages that moved to Chichicastenango.

121. This respectful attitude was institutionalized by Padre Rossbach, a parish priest of the Santo Tomás church from 1898 until his death in 1948. See Alphonso Lingis, "Chichicastenango," in Carolyn Bailey Gill, ed., *Bataille: Writing the Sacred* (London: Routledge, 1995), 8–9.

122. Michel de Certeau, "The Politics of Silence: The Long March of the Indians," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other,* B. Massumi, trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 229. The palimpsest I find in Chichicastenango is much more than a textual construction, however.

123. Daniel Matul is a member of the International Maya League who had to emigrate from the highlands of Guatemala to Costa Rica to escape persecution by the Guatemalan army. He made this assertion in an interview with Bob Carty, "Guatemala's killing fields: The Indian majority in Guatemala is still being slaughtered five centuries after the Spanish invasion. Bob Carty reports on the resistance that never stopped," published electronically in *New Internationalist* 226 (December 1991) http://www.newint.org/features/1991/12/05/killing/. Although the information about the designation of the pre-Hispanic temple is difficult to verify, other sources imply that in Chichicastenango, the myth of primordial twins and biblical stories are strongly intertwined. Sol Tax, an ethnographer who studied Chichicastenango in the 1930s, in his *Notes on Santo Tomas Chichicastenango* (microfilm, University of Chicago Library, 1947), noted on page 464 (hand-numbered) that people of Chichicastenango believed "there were two brothers, both Santo Tomas." Also, on page 460, he recorded a belief that just before his death on the Cross, "Jesus miraculously turned around completely, exposing his back, and from his back came maize." This could imply that Capilla del Calvario and Jesus were also symbolically connected to mythical twins. The god of the corn, an incarnation of One Hanahpu (Tedlock, *Popol Vuh*, 140), is the most important god of Quiché Maya. See Flavio Rodas N., Ovidio Rodas C., and Laurence F. Hawkins, *Chichicastenango: The Kiche Indians, Their History and Culture, Sacred Symbols of their Dress and Textiles* (Guatemala: Unión Tipográfica, 1940), 65.

124. I am grateful to Alexander Shaia for drawing my attention to this possible interpretation.

125. See John 11:16, 20:24, and 21:2. The very name Thomas comes from the Aramaic *te'oma',* a twin.

126. Whether or not the Maya had access to such written resources, this Mayan mythology strangely resonates with the story recorded in *The Acts of Thomas.* It was Saint Thomas who was sent by Jesus, actually tricked by him, to convert the Indians of India. Whatever the actual reason for the confusion of words, the Spaniards used "Indian" to refer to the people of Mesoamerica. Jesus identified himself as the brother of Saint Thomas when he said, "I am not Judas, but I am the brother of Judas." Judas was the second name of Saint Thomas, and the text directly implies that the reference was to him. Saint Thomas was also called "twin of the Messiah." See A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction-Text-Commentary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 70, 85.

127. Tedlock, *Popol Vuh*, 43, 141.

128. Olivier Debroise, "Heart Attacks: On a Culture of Missed Encounters and Misunderstandings," in Olivier Debroise, Elisabeth Sussman, Matthew Teitelbaum (curators), *The Bleeding Heart. Exhibition catalog.* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 27. In this perspective, Debroise discusses topics ranging from the history of discovery and reburying of Coatlícue to a more recent exhibition of 300 almost identical depictions of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

3. Structures of Tolerance and Religious Domination

Many names of towns are listed here in multiple versions, reflecting the complexity of languages historically in use in those territories. Timothy Snyder addresses a similar issue in *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), xix–xi.

1. As such, it was the object of intense missionary work undertaken by the Catholics from the West and the Orthodox from the south. See Jerzy Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 55. See also the third chapter in Antanas Musteikis, *The Reformation in Lithuania: Religious Fluctuations in the Sixteenth Century* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs; New York: distributed by Columbia University Press, 1988).

2. Olgierd, who created the power of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, had two wives: the first, Maria, princess of Vitebsk, raised her children in the Orthodox religion; the second, Julianna, princess from Tver, although a believer of the Orthodox religion, permitted her son Jogaila, heir of Olgierd's power, to grow up in paganism. The State of the Teutonic Order, which had been awarded Prussian lands by the Polish duke Konrad Mazowiecki (Conrad of Mazovia) in 1226 to convert pagans, posed the biggest threat to the Grand Duchy. In 1382, Jagiełło signed the Dubissa Treaty with the leaders of the State of the Teutonic Order and promised to convert himself and his country to Catholicism in four years.

3. Paweł Jasienica emphasizes the role of Lublin in the events leading to the union and says, after Jan Długosz, that, in recognition of their role in preparing the union, in 1383, Jagiełło and Skirgiełło granted the citizens of Lublin special trading rights. Paweł Jasienica, *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów: Srebrny wiek* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982), 54. Lublin was also the town where Jagiełło finalized his political negotiations in 1386 and where, in the same year, he stopped on his way to Kraków to be crowned. See Jasienica, *Rzeczpospolita,* 59, and *Polska Jana Długosza,* ed. Henryk Samsonowicz (Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), 180.

4. The International Research and Exchanges Board Short-Term Travel Grant supported the research in Lublin.

5. Painted decorations in the chapel have been studied and well reproduced in Anna Różycka-Bryzek, *Freski w kaplicy Zamku Lubelskiego* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowka University Press, 2000). Apart from the descriptive and rather outdated Jerzy Siennicki, "Kościół Św. Trójcy w Lublinie" *Południe* (Zeszyt I, 1924/25), there is no comprehensive study of the building itself. In an unpublished study, Tomasz Gąsiorowski compares this structure to similar Czech and Polish one-column chapels and concludes that the main volume of the Holy Trinity Chapel in Lublin was most likely constructed during the last quarter of the fourteenth century and consecrated in 1401.

6. See Różycka-Bryzek *Freski,* 30 and 35. In this and her earlier publication concerning the paintings, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła w kaplicy Zamku Lubelskiego* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983), Różycka-Bryzek identifies all figures and analyzes their arrangement against the proper model of an Orthodox church. Frequently, when she uncovers an inconsistency, Różycka-Bryzek explains it as a compromise of the symbolic canon resulting from an unfortunate match between the paintings and the Gothic building.

7. See Robert M. Kungel, "Późnogotyckie cerkwie Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego," in Jerzy Lileyko, ed., *Sztuka ziem wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej XVI-XVIII w* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2000), 37–54.

8. Różycka-Bryzek acknowledges this general shift in this and other Polish churches where Gothic architecture coexisted with elements of Russian Byzantine paintings. Anna Różycka-Bryzek, "Bizantyńsko-słowiańskie malowidła w gotyckich kościołach Polski pierwszych Jagiellonów," Dzieje Lubelszczyzny, Tom VI; *Między Wschodem i Zachodem, Część III, Kultura artystyczna,* ed. Tadeusz Chrzanowski (Lublin: Lubelskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1992), 338.

9. It is not a coincidence that the paintings were completed only twenty-one years before the Union of Florence (1439), the most successful attempt to reconcile Constantinople and Rome.

10. As a continuation of such efforts, Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, son of Władysław Jagiełło, built another Gothic structure in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, the Chapel of Saint Cross in Wawel, and decorated it again with Russian-Byzantine paintings. A fragment of its exterior is visible on the left side of Figure 3.1.

11. Possibly, Jan Cangier constructed the gable in 1627–29 (1635–42). See Wadowski, referenced in Tadeusz Bernatowicz, "Rola Lublina w architekturze sakralnej Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego," in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem*, 17. The initial shape of the Gothic gable was still recorded in an engraving of 1618. The interior frame of the elevated doorway was probably covered with Renaissance decorations in 1521.

12. According to a report from 1575 written by Venetian nuncio Hieronim Lippomano, during the time of Lublin's famous fairs, in addition to permanent inhabitants, the town hosted Tartars, Turks, Jews, Germans, Armenians, Lithuanians, as well as merchants from Moscovy and Volhynia. A similar document written by Alexander Guagnini in 1592 provides a similar account and adds Greeks to that multicultural mix. This information is quoted in Aleksander Kossowski, *Protestantyzm w Lublinie i w Lubelskiem w XVI-XVII w* (Lublin: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1933), 17.

13. Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg in 1517. In 1534, Henry VIII of England broke with the Roman Catholic Church. After John Calvin moved to Geneva to found the "City of God" in 1562–98, France experienced its religious wars with the St. Bartholomew Massacre of 1572. In 1567, the Spanish army invaded the Netherlands to suppress its religious revolt. The last big religious war, the so-called Thirty Years' War, took place in Germany in 1618–48.

14. See Janusz Tazbir, *Tradycje tolerancji religijnej w Polsce* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1980), 27. This is also why the Holy Inquisition did not play a major role in the commonwealth. While in most sixteenth-century European countries the death penalty for crimes of religion was a common practice, frequently carried out in the cruelest forms, in Poland burning at the stake for heresy occurred only once, in 1539, when an old woman in Kraków refused to accept the divinity in Jesus Christ. See Tazbir, *Tradycje,* 28-29, and his comparison of this event with the numbers of religious executions in France during the same period.

15. For example, Antanas Muskteikis discusses how Albrecht Hohenzollern facilitated the spread of Lutheranism for political gain and how the University of Königsberg (Kaliningrad, Królewiec, Karaliaučius, Кёнигсберг) advanced this process. See Musteikis, *The Reformation in Lithuania,* 41–48.

16. This term was used, for example, by nuncio Ruggieri in 1568. Cited in Stanisław Załęski, *Jezuici w Polsce: w skróceniu, 5 tomów w jednym, z dwoma mapami* (Kraków: Drukarnia W. L. Anczyca i Sp., 1908), 3.

17. The history of Copernican ideas is emblematic of that time. A Lutheran printer in Nuremberg, Germany, was the first to publish the groundbreaking *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. Kopernik developed his theory while holding a clerical position in Frombork (Frauenburg), in the Catholic cathedral chapter. Ninety years later, Galileo Galilei (Galileo), nominated the foremost mathematician of the University of Pisa and given the title of mathematician to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, was publicly humiliated and forced to recant his belief in the Copernican doctrine by the Inquisition of Rome.

18. The compact made specific reference to unrest in other countries as one reason for its founding. As Tazbir emphasizes, this was the most tolerant law in Europe of that time. While comparable laws in other countries provided protection limited to specific confessions, Huguenots in the Edict of Nantes or four confessions in the case of Transylvania, the Compact of Warsaw protected without discrimination all religions and confessions. *Szlachta* of the commonwealth were obligated to defend these liberties militarily should it became necessary. The compact was an important element of establishing the commonwealth as the elective monarchy, a new political system developed after the death of Sigismund II Augustus, the last Jagiellon, in 1572.

19. This map is based on two maps published by Jerzy Kłoczowski, the first in a set of maps attached to *Kościół w Polsce*, ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski (Kraków: Znak, 1966), the second in his *A History of Polish Christianity*, xiv. These maps included all major religious denominations, even relatively underrepresented Islam, but did not include information about the Armenian Church and Jewish communities. They are omitted perhaps because there were few Armenians, while Jews were omnipresent in the territories of the commonwealth, with centers of their religious and cultural life in larger towns.

20. The Transylvanian Principality made other significant exceptions. Besides a large and mostly Catholic population of Magyars, it was home to a strong German community of Lutheran affiliation, a sizable Romanian population, which for centuries followed the Orthodox religion, and many smaller ethnic groups. As in Prussia and Lithuania, the order of the Teutonic Knights was also invited by the Hungarian King Andrew II to convert the people of Transylvania to Christianity in 1211, only to be expelled in 1225. For a general discussion of the political aspects of the Reformation in Eastern Europe—not including issues concerning Orthodox or Jewish communities— see Graeme Murdoch, "Eastern Europe," in *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (London: Routledge, 2000), 190–210.

21. Gdańsk experienced a turbulent transformation of power relationships when, in 1525, townspeople united by Lutheranism rebelled against the old establishment.

22. Jean Calvin, *l'Institution de la religion chrétienne,* 1.11.4, available in English as John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. XX, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Westminster Press, 1960).

23. Ibid., 1.11.12. After Nicea II (787), and generally in the Russian Orthodox tradition, icon painters were not allowed to depict God the Father.

24. It was the unique combination of linguistic and spatial imagination that highlighted the similarities between Calvinism and the Byzantine tradition. Catharine Randall provides a most

insightful analysis of Calvin as "an architect of the Church," designing the new *Institution* as a "superb organization . . . [an] intensely systematic and organized structure." She discusses how he used language and spatial metaphors to construct this type of an "invisible church." Thus, according to Randall, Calvin viewed scripture as "as a network of sites that structure significance," Christ as "a vessel, a container, a storehouse, a depository, all spatial locations," and "inner, or moral space" as the space of actual religious construction. See Catharine Randall, *Building Codes: The Aesthetics of Calvinism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 33–38. For a discussion of personal contacts between Orthodoxy and the people from Calvin's circle, as well as ways of disseminating new ideas in the Eastern Commonwealth, such as a Calvinist catechism published in Ruthenian by Szymon Budny, see Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 99–168.

25. Musteikis, *The Reformation in Lithuania*, 50. Musteikis emphasizes that in Lithuania this phenomenon of mass conversion of the upper classes to Protestantism later produced an equally radical shift back to Catholicism. Snyder notes that, at the time of Reformation, most of them converted from Eastern Christianity. See Snyder, *The Reconstruction*, 22.

26. Faustus Socinus was born and educated in Italy and arrived in Poland in 1579.

27. Stanislaw Tworek, in *Zbór Lubelski i jego rola w ruchu ariańskim w Polsce w XVI i XVII wieku* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1966), discusses in detail how close the connections were between Lublin's community of Arians and Faustus Socinus. Socinus lived in Kraków until the excesses of the Counter-Reformation forced him to move to a village nearby.

28. Janusz Tazbir, *Reformacja, kontrreformacja, tolerancja* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1999), 2. According to Kłoczowski, after the end of the sixteenth century, in Wielkopolska, there were 142 Lutheran communities (32 Polish and 110 of German origin). He also says that, in the late sixteenth century, the overall number of Calvinist communities in the commonwealth was approximately 500, including 200 in Lithuania, Podlachia, and Belarus. Kłoczowski, *A History*, 99, 106.

29. I am referring to the work of historians of architecture and architects, such as Stanisław Witkiewicz, Jan Witkiewicz-Koszczyc, and Karol Siciński in Poland, who, like many of their colleagues in European countries at the beginning of the twentieth century, attempted to produce the architectural expression of national identity. Even during the Stalin era, when Warszawa was to receive a gift from the Soviet Union in the form of a copy of the socrealist Lomonosov University building, the Palace of Culture and Science, architects added a so-called Renaissance parapet to the Soviet monument to make it truly Polish.

30 "Mannerism," in *Encyclopædia Britannica* online.

31. This small town, a member of the Hanseatic League, was established by the Teutonic Order at the site of an earlier settlement.

32. The initial building, a simple two-story masonry structure, was built at the end of the thirteenth century.

33. The windows of the parapet were added much later, when the third floor was constructed.

34. As the remnants of medieval window openings show, new windows did not quite follow the preexisting layout.

35. Although Catholic bishops owned the town from 1505, Chełmno attracted many Protestants, mostly Lutherans, and its vicinity, especially villages such as Dorposz Chełmiński, Wielkie and Małe Łunawy, Podwiesk, and Dolne Wymiary, became a destination for Mennonites immigrating from the Netherlands after the mid-sixteenth century. This caused multiple conflicts between the burghers and the ruling bishops, Stanisław Hozjusz (Hosius) and Piotr Kostka, who in 1580 expelled many Protestants.

36. Other sources attribute the design to Hanusz Scholz, whose education in Königsberg might have exposed him to Protestant ideas from the Netherlands. See Tadeusz Chrzanowski, "Geografia niderlandyzmu polskiego (XV-XVII w.)" in *Niderlandyzm w sztuce polskiej: Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki Toruń, grudzień 1992* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995), 75.

37. See Stefan Kozakiewicz, "Początek działalności Komasków, Tessyńczyków i Gryzończyków w Polsce–Okres Renesansu (1520–80), in *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, Jg. XXI, 1 (1959): 3–29, esp. 15.

38. See J. Sadowski, *Przyjęcia do prawa miejskiego Lublina w XVII w.*, Lublin 1938, 59, referenced in Bernatowicz, "Rola Lublina."

39. Stefan Kozakiewicz studied their origins and where they worked as builders in the commonwealth. Unfortunately, he overlooks the issue of Protestantism in Italy. Comparing only dates and places, they indicate that religious ferment and subsequent persecution might have contributed to this seemingly curious wave of immigrants. According to Caponetto, the years 1520 to 1580, when large numbers of Komasks and Tessyńczyks emigrated, approximately correlate with the rise and fall of Protestantism in Italy. See Salvatore Caponetto, *The Protestant Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, trans. A. C. Tedeschi and J. Tedeschi (Kirksville, Mo: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999). Moreover, although information now seems scarce, the maps in Kozakiewicz and Caponetto indicate at least a partial overlap of the center of the Reformation in northern Italy and the places from which people emigrated. The area of Valtellina includes towns with organized Protestant groups and, at the same time, the birthplaces of immigrants to the commonwealth, specifically: Chiavenna, Piuro, Morbegno, Sondrio, Tegio, Tirano, and Poschiavo. See maps in Kozakiewicz, "Początek działalności," 5, and Caponetto, *Protestant Reformation*, 143.

40. The first (shorter) version was published in 1593–94. The full collection of these engravings is available as Wendel Dietterlin, *The Fantastic Engravings of Wendel Dietterlin* (New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1968), with an introduction by Adolf K. Placzek.

41. Sebastiano Serlio, an evangelical, born in Bologna. His *The Fourth Book of Architecture* was first published in 1537 in Venice. Serlio left rebellious Venice just before the Roman Inquisition was established, and he arrived in France in 1540 or 1541. For a general discussion of his work in the context of issues of the Reformation, see Randall, *Building Codes*, 79-80. Serlio's influence is discernable in many other examples of Polish architecture; one of the best is the vault decorations in the town hall in Poznań (Posen), designed in the mid-sixteenth century by another Italian, Giovanni Batista Quadro.

42. This stylistic category was introduced in 1926 and expanded in 1937 by Polish historian and philosopher Władysław Tatarkiewicz. According to his own assessment, a more updated version of that research was also published as "Typ lubelski i typ kaliski w architekturze XVII wieku," in Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *O sztuce polskiej XVII i XVIII wieku: architektura, rzeźba* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966), 108–49.

43. See Kossowski, *Protestantyzm w Lublinie,* for information about the history of Protestant communities in the region.

44. See Bernatowicz, "Rola Lublina," 15–36. Jerzy Lileyko sees this phenomenon as a unique example of the Polonization of Italian Renaissance. He concurs with art historians who believe that the originality of the Lublin Renaissance might have resulted from "misunderstandings or even haute vulgarization of formal principles imported from leading centers of art, mostly Italy." Jerzy Lileyko, "Wprowadzenie w problematykę obrad," in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem*, 10 (my translation).

45. See, for example, the vault decorations painted by Dutch artist Hans Vredeman de Vries, who spent part of his life in Gdańsk. For more information and reproductions of his paintings, see *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Renaissance im Norden* (München: Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2002, in collaboration with Lemgo: Weserrenaissance-Museum Schloß Brake).

46. This kind of architectural decision resonates with a term "antytektoniczny," antitectonic, which Kozakiewicz used to describe imports from the mid-sixteenth-century border between Italy and Switzerland. See Kozakiewicz, "Początek działalności," 21.

47. Zamość is a town south of Lublin designed in 1578 by Italian architect Bernardo Morando, from Padova, for Jan Zamojski. It was designed according to new urban ideas of an ideal city to accommodate not only Poles but communities of different cultural backgrounds and religions. The synagogue was designed for a well-established community of Sephardic Jews and newcomers, Jews immigrating from the Netherlands and Flanders.

48. Another example of a similarly decorated vault is in the collegiate church of Zamość, today a cathedral. The church was designed by Bernardo Morando, built in 1587–98, and all decorations were completed around 1630. The works on the vaulted ceiling probably date from around 1615.

49. The income the *starostwo* of Kazimierz Dolny generated was to pay a royal debt. See Jadwiga Teodorowicz-Czerepińska *Kazimierz Dolny: Monografia historyczno-urbanistyczna* (Kazimierz Dolny: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Kazimierza, 1981), 34.

50. Piotr Firlej, the family patron of the early sixteenth century, and his father Mikołaj were Catholic. Piotr died in 1553 and left three sons, Jan, Mikołaj, and Andrzej, who all converted to Calvinism. Among them, Jan, from 1552 *starosta* of Kazimierz Dolny, but also the leader of Polish Protestants, held many state offices crucial during the interregnum. After the death of his older brother Jan, Mikołaj Firlej became an elected leader of the Polish Calvinists, performing those duties until his death in 1588. In the next generation, religious choices become even more complicated. Of the five sons of Jan Firlej, only one, Andrzej, remained to the end of his life a Calvinist; the others chose Catholicism. See Kossowski, *Protestantyzm*, 87–88, and Valerian Krasiński, *Historical Sketch of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of the Reformation in Poland and of the Influence Which the Scriptural Doctrines Have Exercised on that Country in Literary, Moral, and Political Respects*, vol. 2 (London: Printed for the author and sold by Messrs. Murray, 1838–40), 4–28. Records show that in 1589, King Zygmunt III Waza (Sigismundus Vasa) confirmed the right of Mikołaj Firlej (one of the five sons of Jan) to the starostwo of Kazimierz Dolny as a token of gratitude for the way Mikołaj represented the commonwealth during his mission to the Emperor Rudolph II of Germany (Holy Roman Emperor). See *Sumariusz Metryki Koronnej dla panowania Zygmunta III Wazy 1587–1632*, 174, k. 390–91v. In 1644, the Firlejs's rights to Kazimierz Dolny expired.

51 Many foreign architects and artists worked in Janowiec. Among them, perhaps the most famous was Santi Gucci (1530(?)–1600), an Italian mannerist architect who moved to Poland after 1550 and worked for the Firlejs in Janowiec in 1565–85.

52. Husarski lists names like Falk, Lak, Wetterding, Wilham, or Wonschoelen. Wacław Husarski, *Kazimierz Dolny* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie, 1953), 26. Another historian, Teodorowicz-Czerepińska, emphasizes the strongly Polish character of the town. Nevertheless, she acknowledges the strong ties to the foreigners working in Janowiec and lists three undoubtedly Italian names: Balin, Leonardus, and Anullo. See Teodorowicz-Czerepińska, *Kazimierz*, 61–63. She also refers to a community of Jews (using a pejorative expression, "żywioł żydowski") and some Scots as permanent citizens. This community of merchants was strong enough to compete with the Firlejs for control over trade rules, and it resulted in the law of 1622, aimed against foreign traders, and of 1677, encouraging Armenians, Greeks, and Jews to settle and establish new businesses in Kazimierz Dolny. Ibid., 38, 43, and 66.

53. The etymology of the name Przybyła implies a newcomer. Husarski considers the possibility that Przybyłowie might have been new to the region, but he discusses this only to conclude that in the sixteenth century they were well-established in Kazimierz Dolny. Husarski, *Kazimierz*, 22.

54. For a systematic classification of such figures, see Karol Majewski, "Dekoracja fasad kamienic Mikołaja i Krzysztofa Przybyłów w Kazimierzu Dolnym," in *Studia i Materiały Lubelskie: Historia Sztuki* 1, t2 (Lublin: Muzeum Lubelskie, 1963), 73–128.

55. The Przybyła brothers were nominally Catholic. Records show that they contributed to funding a small Catholic church in Kazimierz Dolny and sent their sons to Kraków for theological education to pursue careers in the Catholic Church, (at that time the only option for people of common birth but aspiring to state titles). See Teodorowicz-Czerepińska, *Kazimierz,* 50 and 64, and Husarski, *Kazimierz*, 34.

56. This depiction of Christ ends a sculpted sequence of figures devoted to his life. See Majewski, "Dekoracja," 85.

57. In the nineteenth century, this unorthodox representation of Christ and the devil might have been almost entirely covered by decoration, thus extending the rhythm of parapet decorations. Such hiding of a suspicious legacy is shown on a detailed 1862 engraving by A. Lerue, published as Figure 8 in Husarski, *Kazimierz*, 31. The two figures were still visible in an 1830 engraving by J. Piwowarski, published as Figure 46 in Husarski, *Kazimierz,* 99.

58. Some of them are related to Hans Vredeman de Vries's print *Dorica-Ionica,* Sheet F, published by Hieronymous Cock in Antwerp, 1565. Others resemble his painted visions published in *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Renaissance*.

59. It is likely that Przybyłowie bought the two houses in 1580 (?) and only remodeled them by adding decorations. See Teodorowicz-Czerepińska, referring to studies of the subject done by Majewski in *Kazimierz*, 54.

60. See Majewski, "Dekoracja," 98–99. Also, Teodorowicz-Czerepińska sees Kamienice Przybyłów as provincial, "excessive and naive" versions of the true Italian style. Teodorowicz-Czerepińska, *Kazimierz*, 63–64. In her remarks, she follows the lead of Adam Miłobędzki, who in 1972 declared that, though fascinating as provincial production, mannerist buildings in *Kazimierz* cannot be considered "great" art.

See Adam Miłobędzki, "Ze studiów nad architekturą Kazimierza Dolnego," in *Granice Sztuki* (Warszawa: PWN, 1972), esp. 100.

61. According to Anthony Blunt, it is likely that the original plans were developed by an Italian architect (possibly Domenico de Cortona) but were modified in the course of execution. Roof works on the main building, the so-called main keep, were being done in 1537. See Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France: 1500–1700* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), 12.

62. As early as 1523, Jean Vallière was the first Protestant burned at the stake in Paris.

63. Randall, *Building Codes*, 80.

64. Ibid., 78.

65. Ibid.

66. It was built in 1549–50.

67. Randall, *Building Codes,* 91.

68. Ibid., 106.

69. Ibid., 117–19.

70. Ibid., 118.

71. Ibid., 35, 37.

72. Ibid., 26.

73. Anthony Blunt, *Philibert de l'Orme* (London, A. Zwemmer, 1958), 134.

74. Randall, *Building Codes*, 112.

75. Caponetto, *Protestant Reformation*, 23.

76. Ibid., 263.

77. Giulio Romano had made a series of pornographic drawings showing various positions of sexual intercourse, engraved later by Marcantonio Raimondi. They were published with descriptive sonnets by Pietro Aretino but were soon confiscated, and all involved were prosecuted by the Roman authorities. Bette Talvacchia says that *I Modi,* as a new kind of commodity, "challenged established powers and ideas." Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), xi.

78. Federigo Gonzaga was nineteen when the works on Chambord began.

79. See Egon Verheyen, *The Palazzo del Te in Mantua: Images of Love and Politics* (Baltimore, Md.: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 16–19.

80. Vasari visiting Mantua in 1544 found some works still unfinished.

81. See Verheyen, *Palazzo*, 19–21.

82. Ibid., 19. Palazzo del Te was constructed in phases between 1524 and approximately 1535. Certain works were completed in preparation for official visits, including that of Emperor Charles V.

83. Ibid., 22.

84. These two directions had unequivocal religious meaning for Protestants—the vertical was associated with the divine and the horizontal with the profane.

85. According to the master plan for the construction of Palazzo del Te copied from earlier originals by Hippollito Anreasi in 1567/8, initially the enfilade was meant to align only two doors, and the openings on both sides of the Loggia di Davide were symmetrical. Possibly, the need to strengthen

the tunnel effect prevented the actual doors in the loggia from being symmetrical. The plan of 1783, by Antonio Maria Campi, shows the asymmetrical loggia.

86. Randall, *Building Codes*, 35.

87. In a note accompanying the image shown in Figure 3.16a, Sebastiano Serlio generally encourages a continuation of the rustic tradition of mixing the architectural orders, Doric and Ionic, for example. It was in the context of his note, calling for hybridity in the orders, that he praised Giulio Romano as an architect and his design for Palazzo del Te in particular.

88. Vignola's initial sketches for the façade were similar in their rigorous simplicity. Yet Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, the project's patron, selected Giacomo della Porta's design.

89. See Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "'Le style jésuite n'existe pas': Jesuit Corporate Culture and the Visual Arts," *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773*, ed. J. W. O'Malley et al., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 38–89.

90. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 36.

91. Ibid., 36–37.

92. In *The Jesuits,* O'Malley et al. show how such actions were adapted to existing conditions and functioning networks of political dependencies.

93. Deleuze lists three notions fundamental to the baroque mathematical physics of Leibniz: "the fluidity of matter, the elasticity of bodies, and motivating spirit as a mechanism." See Deleuze, *The Fold*, 4.

94. This symbolic practice is analogous to the way Franciscan friars separated the techniques for capturing attention in Mesoamerica from the processes of delivering religious knowledge.

95. Both the Counter-Reformation designers in Europe and the missionaries in the colonies seem to have believed that an excess of articulation disarms other meanings. This may be the reason for the similarity between baroque on the old continent and the *horror vacui* in colonial churches discussed in chapter 2.

96. Ibid., 11–12.

97. In discussing the issue of symbolic projection—in his case downward projection of souls onto bodies—Deleuze specifically refers to painting on the vault in the church of St. Ignazio. (Ibid.)

98. Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius : A Translation and Commentary by George E. Ganss, S.J.* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1992), 41.

99. Ibid.

100. These efforts coincide with the time when the order was reestablished by Pope Pius VII after more than a century of being banned. See John W. O'Malley, S. J., "The Historiography of the Society of Jesus: Where Does It Stand Today?" in O'Malley et al., *The Jesuits*, 11–15.

101. The work was also published in a combined and abbreviated version in 1909. Załęski, *Jezuici,* 2.

102. Załęski, *Jezuici*, 3. Catholic bishops and higher members of ecclesiastical hierarchy had ex officio seats in the *senat*.

103. Kłoczowski, *A History*, 101. The justifications for religious changes were grounded in examples taken from practices of Orthodox nations: Ruthenians, Bulgarians, and Greeks. It is also not a coincidence that Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski was later persecuted by the Catholic Church under the leadership of

Lippomano, and this threat was serious enough to require the king's protection and a mandate from the Sejm of 1556 exempting Modrzewski from church jurisdiction. The life of Modrzewski reflects the changes in the politics of religion in Poland. An open-minded Catholic who exchanged ideas with Martin Luther and Philip Melanchton, he freely explored modern social and political ideas only to be accused of Calvinist sympathies at the end of his life.

104. Załęski, *Jezuici*, 4, 6–7. The first Jesuits were officially invited to Poland by cardinal Stanisław Hozjusz (Hosius) in 1564.

105. As early as 1573, Piotr Skarga, one of the intellectual leaders of the Jesuit order in Poland, equated the religious situation in Lithuania to that of India. Skarga said: "Non requiramus Indias Orientis et Occidentis, est vera India Lituania et Septemtrio." Piotr Skarga's letter to W. Magio, Vilnius 1573, in *Listy Ks. Piotra Skargi,* TJ z I. 1566–1610 (J. Sygańki, 1912), 55. This information is also referenced in L. Piechnik, "Działalność kulturalna Towarzystwa Jezusowego na północnych i wschodnich ziemiach polskich w XVI-XVII," *Między Wschodem i Zachodem, Część I, Kultura umysłowa*, ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989). Załęski attributes a similar statement to King Stefan Batory who, in 1579, wrote to Skarga and asked him to send the Jesuits to Połock. According to Jesuit records, the king believed that the people of the Russian nation living in Połock were as unaware of the true religion as the inhabitants of India and Japan. Załęski, *Jezuici*, 17.

106. Like Figure 3.4, this image is drawn after another map published by Jerzy Kłoczowski in *Kościół w Polsce*, ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski (Kraków: Znak, 1966).

107. Kłoczowski, *A History*, 135. On page xv, Kłoczowski also published a map showing Catholic churches in the commonwealth in 1770 and distinguished between the Latin and Greek rite. The map does not include any information about any Protestants, however.

108. As with the map shown in Figure 3.4, Kłoczowski's source maps did not include information about Jewish communities.

109. Kłoczowski, *A History*, 155.

110. The last non-Catholic *poseł* (legally elected representative), the Calvinist Andrzej Piotrowski, was expelled in 1718. See Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland, vol. 1* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1982), 182, and Jasienica, *Rzeczpospolita,* 96. One of the most infamous disturbances occurred in Lublin in 1633, caused by Jesuit students. It ultimately led to the suppression of local Calvinists. See Henryk Gmiterek "Tumult wyznaniowy w Lublinie w 1633 roku," in *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce,* Tom L, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2006), 156-67.

111. To a large degree, the union was prepared by the Jesuits, and the pope accepted it a year earlier, in 1595.

112. For a discussion of ramifications of these changes for architecture, see Leszek Kańczugowski, "Zagadnienia architektoniczno-ideowe cerkwi tomaszowsko-hrubieszowskich z XIX wieku," in *Między Wschodem i Zachodem, Część III, Kultura artystyczna,* 247–54.

113. Kłoczowski, *A History,* 162.

114. Ibid.

115. Nesvizh was a center of the Radvila family (Radziwiłł, Радзівіл), one of the most powerful in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The church was designed by a Jesuit, Giovannie Maria Bernardoni.

See Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "East and West: Jesuit Art and Artists in Central Europe, and Central European Art in the Americas," in J. W. O'Malley et al., *The Jesuits,* 274–304.

116. Ibid., 279–87.

117. Today a cathedral, the church was designed by a Jesuit architect, Jan (Giovanni) Maria Bernardoni, and built on the site of an Arian congregation house, originally the residence of Stanisław Tęczyński.

118. Załęski, *Jezuici*, 167, my translation.

119. Figure 3.22, for example, shows an illusionistic image visually closing a similar passage in Nesvizh.

120. The Jesuits experienced difficulties in establishing their bases in Kraków. The academy, now called the Jagiellonian University, provided increasing resistance to their political and educational ambitions. Because Lithuania was more dependent on a few noble families, it was also more likely to follow new political trends. Thus, in 1570, the Jesuits created a college in Vilnius and soon after, in 1579, managed to have it elevated to the rank of university. (The first royal document funding the University of Vilnius was issued a year earlier.) Piotr Skarga, the Jesuit leader who had called for the colonization of Lithuania, became its first *rektor.* According to Józef Łukaszewicz, in 1611, students of the university burned down a famous Calvinist school and the congregation house, and by 1640 Calvinist education was officially banned in Vilnius. See Józef Łukaszewicz, *Dzieje kościołów wyznania helweckiego w Litwie, tom II* (Poznań: Drukarnia Orędownika na Garbarach, 1843), 163–65. Also see Załęski, *Jezuici*, 16. The interior was renovated in 1737–49. Krzysztof Glaubitz collaborated with Johann Hedel and Józef Woszczyński. See *Baroque in Lithuania: Guide* (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 1996), 108–11. Texts by Irena Vaišvilaitė, Tojana Račiūnaitė; compiled by Arūnas Sverdiolas.

121. Only on the peripheries did a degree of diversity continue. Janusz Małłek, for example, observes that in Royal Prussia, even after the reduction of the number of Protestant (mostly Lutheran) parishes, "in general Catholic and Protestants lived peaceably side by side until 1724." Janusz Małłek (after W. Neumeyer), "The Reformation in Poland and Prussia in the Sixteenth Century: Similarities and Differences," in Karin Maag, ed., *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe* (Hants, UK: Scolar Press, 1997), 186.

122. According to Jerzy Kłoczowski, in 1772, before the first partitioning, there were 1,301 Catholic convents in the commonwealth. See Kłoczowski, *A History*, xvi and 141–49. Later, approximately after 1730 in Poland, the unrestricted power of the orders attracted criticism of new thinkers.

123. Even mendicant orders, whose founding principle called for not possessing material goods and a livelihood secured only by voluntary donations, were granted large complexes of land in order to function in the eastern territories. See Kłoczowski, *A History*, 143.

124. Paweł Antoni Fontana designed similar structures in Włodawa and Lewartów (today called Lubartów).

125. The paintings were executed around 1758.

126. The Uniate cathedral was built in 1735–56 and was most likely designed by Paweł Antoni Fontana, the same architect who designed the Piarist church.

127. In the eighteenth century in the Lublin region (a large area with Chełm as its most eastern town), only three churches were built on the traditional layout of a Latin cross with a cupola. One

of them was the Jesuit church in Krasnystaw (1697–1715), and the other two were built for the Polish Uniate Church, the cathedral in Chełm, and a church for the Basilian order in Biała Podlaska (1747–59). See, Jerzy Kowalczyk, "Architektura sakralna między Wisłą a Bugiem w okresie późnego Baroku," in Tadeusz Chrzanowski, ed., *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny, Tom VI Między Wschodem a Zachodem: Część III, Kultura artystyczna*, 50.

128. This line of questioning, included in Lileyko, "Wprowadzenie," in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem*, 13, was following Mariusz Karpowicz, "Uwagi o przemianach malarstwa i rzeźby polskiej w latach 1711–1740," in *Sztuka 1 poł. XVIII wieku. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki* (Warszawa, 1981), 95–97. Professor Lileyko organized the symposium as head of the Department of Art History at the Catholic University of Lublin.

129. Władysław Tatarkiewicz, "Dwa baroki, krakowski i wileński," *Prace Komisji Historii Sztuki*, VII (1939–46), 13, my translation; In Polish: "Ściany kosciołów są traktowane, jakby były z giętkiego materiału; fasady ich falują. Unikają nie tylko płaszczyzn, ale nawet linii prostych; nawet gzymsy nie przebiegają poziomo, lecz krągłymi liniami wznoszą się i opadają . . . kolumny ustawione pod kątem, wnęki to płytkie, to głębokie, to z figurami, to bez, w gwałtownych ruchach przebiegająca sylwetka szczytu, "cited in Lileyko, "Wprowadzenie," in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem*, 12.

130. The church was designed by Jan Krzysztof Glaubitz and built in 1756–63. It was demolished in 1970.

131. The passage in Polish: "W Polsce idee zrodzone na Zachodzie przejmowano od dawna. Nie zawsze rozumiano je identycznie jak w miejscach ich narodzin. W Paryżu i Rzymie odrzucenie kanonu i preferencje dla pełnej swobody twórczej traktowano jako koncepcję intelektualną , swego rodzaju propozycję do rozważań w akademii lub jako temat konwersacji w salonie. Siła tradycji, nacisk akademii, od stuleci utrwalone zasady były tak silne, że owej swobody nigdy nie nadużyto. Czesław Miłosz w jednym ze swoich esejów pisze, że tam teoretyczne dywagacje „opierały się na cichej umowie o innych miarach stosowanych do czynu i do myśli: myśl nawet najbardziej gwałtowna nie naruszała obyczaju." (Czesław Miłosz, *Rodzinna Europa*, Paris, 1983, 140.) U nas podobnej tradycji i nacisków nie było. Swobodę wyobraźni i swobodę twórczości rozumiano dosłownie i do końca. Może dlatego powstała tu architektura jakby kształtowana z „giętkiego materiału," będąca wyrazem nieskrępowanej inwencji i fantazji twórców, a zarazem dosadnie ilustrującą zasadę, że w zakresie tworzenia form wszystko jest dozwolone. Może wyszukana elegancja sztuki i obyczajów promieniujących na całą Europę z paryskich salonów w czasach regencji Filipa Orleańskiego i panowania Ludwika XV w zetknięciu z autentyczną wiarą i pobożnością trwającą we Lwowie i Wilnie, wciąż jeszcze nie zakwestionowaną przez wolteriańską przewrotność intelektualną, zaowocowała rzeźbą pełną świeckiego, zgoła „salonowego" wdzięku w formie i geście, a jednocześnie ekstatycznego, prawdziwie religijnego wyrazu." Lileyko, "Wprowadzenie," in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem*, 13.

132. Welamin Rutski was once a follower of Calvin but, at the request of the pope, converted back to reformed Eastern Orthodoxy in order to shape the Uniate Church. The Bishops of that denomination were selected from the ranks of Basilian Fathers. Kłoczowski, *A History*, 118, 138.

133. The Russian empire tried to do exactly that when they reversed the process for their own benefit and attempted to Russify these territories after partitioning off the commonwealth.

134. Some of the seminar presentations, now collected in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej XVI-XVIII w*, deal with the issue of the politics of art. Piotr Krasny, for example, looks into the controversy surrounding the Uniate and Orthodox sacral architecture in the commonwealth. Significantly, however, he discusses his findings primarily in terms of propaganda-ridden Russian versus Polish knowledge and thus perpetuates taxonomies based on domination. See Piotr Krasny, "Sztuka cerkiewna na ziemiach polskich w xviii wieku: Kilka uwag terminologicznych," in Lileyko, *Sztuka ziem*, 125–39.

4. Technologies of Thought in Victorian England

1. My concept of the technology of thought may be seen as related to the notion of culture industry, which Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer introduced in *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (1947 in German and 1969 in English). Because they assume that the mechanisms producing the mental state of a consumer are deliberate and predictable their observations seem more relevant to the phenomena of the twentieth century. The technology of transforming perception, attitudes, and practices of sense-making emerged in actions that were frequently unselfconscious, open-ended, and seemingly unrelated in the way they tested the very constitution of thought.

2. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

3. Ibid., 96.

4. Crary discusses connections between perception theories of Descartes and Locke. Ibid., 43.

5. Ibid., 112–13. See also Bernard Comment, *The Painted Panorama* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999).

6. Crary, *Techniques*, 104–12.

7. Ibid., 116.

8. Jonathan Crary, *Suspension of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 44.

9. Charles S. Peirce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2 (1868): 140–57.

10. Crary, *Suspension of Perception*, 301–10.

11. See, for example, William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890).

12. Foucault identifies Jeremy Bentham's vision for the Panopticon as the crowning example of such a technology. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Random House, 1977), 225.

13. Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, (New York, Pantheon 1972), 102–5.

14. Sir David Brewster invented the kaleidoscope in 1816 and patented it in 1817. See Sir David Brewster, *The Kaleidoscope: Its History, Theory, and Construction* (London: John Murray, 1856), 134–36.

15. Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), originally published in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1863.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 16–17.

18. Peter W. Sinnema, *Dynamics of the Pictured Page: Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 2. The tradition of newspapers was much older in London. The first daily newspaper without illustrations appeared there in 1702. See Lucyle Werkmeister, *The London Daily Press: 1722–1792* (Lincon: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 1.

19. *The Illustrated London News,* May 24, 1851: 451–52. *The Economist,* May 17, 1851: 43. (It was also published in *The Spectator* 9, 1851: 533.)

20. *ILN,* May 24, 1851: 452.

21. The daguerreotype process was invented in 1839, and from the first years of its publication the *ILN* included illustrations engraved from photochemical plates.

22. Historical novels, the genre popularized by Walter Scott, could be seen as analogous to the representational construction of Figure 4.1c.

23. In one of the very first issues of the *ILN* (May 14, 1842: 1), in "Our Address," the editors listed these general subjects as those they planned to "illustrate."

24. The advertisement was also published in the *ILN* August 13, 1887, and August 27, 1887.

25. See, for example, an illustrated history of Pears soap advertising in *Bubbles: Early Advertising Art from A&F Pears Ltd*., ed. Mike Dempsey (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1978).

26. His action prompted an Act of Parliament declaring all foreign coinage illegal.

27. Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851–1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 249.

28. See Clarence Moran, *The Business of Advertising* (London: Methuen & Co., 1905), 168, 171.

29. Ibid., 53.

30. Thomas Laqueur identifies desire as the force simultaneously behind the culture of consumerism and sexual behavior: "Desire, whether for sexual gratification or for consumer goods, lies . . . at the heart of theories of capitalism. A market economy and especially an industrial economy is predicated on social openness, on the notion that the satisfaction of desire—for goods, prestige, services—through labour is beneficial to both the individual and society. It stands in stark opposition to a society of ranks and orders in which convention and sumptuary legislation is meant to keep desire in check. But once the genie of desire is let out, how is it to be restrained when its attention turns to sex? [In Victorian England] a free labour and free exchange were to be sought after, one of free love was clearly not." Thomas Laqueur, "Sex and Desire in the Industrial Revolution," in *The Industrial Revolution and British Society,* ed. Patrick K. O'Brien and Roland Quinault (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 114.

31. Margaret Beetham, "Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre," in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. Laurel Brake (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 25–27.

32. The issue of the relationships between the first impression and memory as essential for advertising practices was discussed by Clarence Moran, who grounded his insights in the psychological research of James Sully. See Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, 11, referring to James Sully, *Outlines of Psychology, with Special Reference to the Theory of Education* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1891).

33. Although in a smaller picture, the same happy infant was also depicted with its mother in the *ILN*, April 10, 1886; April 24, 1886; May 8, 1886; and May 7, 1887.

34. Ad designers who did not understand nuances of timing repeated the most trivial aspect of the progression discussed here and made it into a sequence of images literally looking like time-lapse photography of a client's response to a product. See for example Fry's Chocolate advertisement in the *ILN*, October 18, 1890.

35. For example, when Barratt wanted to sell his soap in the United States, he convinced a famous preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, to officially endorse Pears soap on religious grounds. Beecher not only repeated the famous saying that "cleanliness is next to Godliness," but also made it brand-specific. Later he said that "soap must be considered as a means of Grace, and a clergyman who recommends moral things should be willing to recommend soap. I am told that my commendation of Pear's Soap has opened for it a large sale in the United States. I am willing to stand by every word in favor of it that I ever uttered. A man must be fastidious indeed who is not satisfied with it." See Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 137.

36. See *Montage and Modern Life: 1919–1942*, ed. Matthew Teitelbaum (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

37. Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 201.

38. Reprinted as Eadweard Muybridge, *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala, 1875: The Photographer as Social Recorder,* ed. Bradford Burns (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

39. Those who studied the ethnographic history of Guatemala, especially the changes in common textiles and clothes, observe that the introduction of coffee production redefined social relationships, political structures, and symbolic practices. These changes were rapid and surpassed the effects of centuries of Spanish colonization. See Ann Pollard Rowe, *A Century of Change in Guatemalan Textiles* (New York: The Center for Inter-American Relations, 1981), 12–13, and Margot Blum Schevill, *Maya Textiles of Guatemala* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 49.

40. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 217–19, 224; translated as "epistemological 'thaw'" in Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 185–87, 224.

41. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 186.

42. Ibid., 225.

43. Ibid., 195–228.

44. Jonathan Crary observes that thinkers like Mallarmé, Nietzsche, and Peirce acknowledged the function of the technology of individuals and grounded their studies in the assumption that a knowing subject is provisionally constructed, be it through language or other systems of social meaning or value. Moreover, he links the emphasis on "attention as a way of describing or explaining a perceiving subject" to the same "epistemological crisis." Crary, *Suspension of Perception*, 44.

45. See William Smith, *Advertise. How? When? Where?* (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1863), 12–13.

46. Ibid., 5.

47. Ibid., 136. And he proposes an improvement, a sandwich-man in a uniform.

48. Ibid., 155.

49. Ibid., 156.

50. Henry Sampson, *A History of Advertising from the Earliest Times* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874).

51. The picture was published in Smith, *Advertise*, 142, but the practice was discussed much earlier, in 1843, by Thomas Carlyle in *Past and Present* (New York: New York University Press, 1977 [c 1965]), 144.

52. According to Moran, men carrying advertising boards, the precursors of sandwich-men, appeared in London around the 1840s. *The Business of Advertising*, 42.

53. Ibid., 47. Advertising vans were prohibited in London as early as 1853. Ibid., 165.

54. Ibid., 179. The statement is from a conference that brought together promoters of advertising practices in London (the United Bill-Posters' Association and the London Bill-Posters' Association) and their critics (the Society for Checking the Abuses of Public Advertising).

55. The image was published in Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, between 116 and 117.

56. Figure 4.17 was published in Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, between 40 and 41. It was reprinted from Sampson, *A History of Advertising*, between 26 and 27.

57. Smith, *Advertise*, 119.

58. The concept of heterotopia referred to here was discussed by Michel Foucault in "Des espaces autres," published by the French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/Continuité* in October 1984. English translation by Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," is available at http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html.

59. The image was published in Sampson, *A History of Advertising* and in Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, between 12 and 13.

60. See Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, 167, 186.

61. John Ruskin argued that railways, being "a matter of earnest business," should have a semi-industrial character. He promoted ornament only in places of leisure. In his world of moralistic polarities, he failed to see that traveling by train was redefining entertainment and that commercial promotion produced a new kind of decoration. In his view, the undecorated structure of a railway station was appropriate for a place where nothing could be admired and where people should move through as quickly as possible. John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1989), 119–21 [based on the edition published by George Allen, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent, 1880; first published in 1849].

62. Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, 1, 19, 172.

63. Smith, *Advertise*, 152, emphasis added.

64. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps*, 121.

65. The 1840s were a time of strong economic growth in England. A speculative frenzy, the "railway mania," powered the construction of the railway system. The grand railway stations of London were all designed and/or constructed approximately between the beginning of queen Victoria's reign and the 1850s. London Bridge, the oldest, opened in 1836. Other stations, some of which no longer exist, followed soon after: Euston 1837, Paddington 1838, Blackheath 1849, Kings Cross 1851 (and 1852), Victoria Station 1858 (and 1861). It was also the time of disciplining society through the reeducation of prisoners and the mass education of the lower classes. Reconstruction of the British Museum triggered public discussions about the function of a modern museum. In 1823, Sir Robert Smirke designed the new version of the museum, but construction did not begin until the old Palladian-style structure was demolished in 1842–46. Consequently, museums acquired a new status, manifested by their buildings, and became

essential in modernizing societies. (See Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring, 1988): 73–102, and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, "The Space of the Museum," *Continuum* 3.1 (1990): 57–58, and generally her *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992).

66. About half of the visitors came from other countries.

67. See Hooper-Greenhill's "Space of the Museum" for a discussion of primary and secondary spatializations that emerged in the nineteenth century.

68. See "Professor Cowper's Illustrations of the Scientific Construction of the Palace of International Industry," *ILN,* January 4, 1851: 9–10.

69. *ILN*, November 8, 1851: 566.

70. *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace,* vol. I (London: John Tallis and Co., 1852), iii, 101–102.

71. Mr. Maloney in Christopher Hobhouse, *1851 and the Crystal Palace* (London: John Murray, 1951), 175. Cited in Richards, *The Commodity Culture,* 31.

72. Richards, *The Commodity Culture,* 31.

73. The photograph was published in Nicholas Cooper, *The Opulent Eye: Late Victorian and Edwardian Taste in Interior Design* (London: The Architectural Press Ltd., 1976), 71. Its caption reads: "1890 Plate 19 The Drawing Room, Haymount, Holcombe Brooke, Bury, Lancashire."

74. Ibid., 26.

75. Harry Mallgrave notes that while German architects of the 1820s–1840s grounded their discourses about architecture and its styles in philosophical thought, similar debate among English architects "formed along somehow different and generally less philosophical lines." See Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Modern Architectural Theory: A Historical Survey, 1673–1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 114. This shows that English designers were deeper and unselfconsciously integrated with the spectrum of representational experimentation discussed here.

76. This eclectic style of collecting ideas and then piecing them together has been acknowledged by George P. Landow, among others. See George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), 15, 16, 24.

77. Landow identifies this issue as crucial in the development of Ruskin's aesthetics. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories*, 183–240.

78. The attempt to reconcile the beautiful and the sublime contradicted earlier eighteenth-century ideas assuming the two concepts are mutually exclusive (Edmund Burke). In *Modern Painters,* Ruskin associated ideas of beauty with moral perception, arguing that the "sublime is not distinct from what is beautiful, nor from other sources of pleasure in art, but is only a particular mode and manifestation of them." (*Modern Painters* 3, 128, 130, cited in Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories*, 183.) That could have been said when moral satisfaction was aligned with an elevation of the mind, and when sublimity was reduced primarily to an intensity of emotions.

79. Ibid., 185.

80. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps*, 104.

81. Ibid., 189–90.

82. Ibid., 178.

83. Ibid., 178–80.

84. Ibid., 189.

85. Ibid., 189–90.

86. In the context of this book, the English sense of the sublime seems to be closely related to, almost a refinement of, ways in which Jesuits used the dramatic play of forms to solicit an emotional response and at the same time prevent a critical insight.

87. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps,* 189.

88. J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Dilemma of Style: Architectural Ideas from Picturesque to the Post-Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 99.

89. Ibid., 178.

90. Ibid., 202.

91. Ibid., 208.

92. For photographs of these displays, see Crook, *The Dilemma of Style*, 108–109.

93. Ibid., 161–92.

94. A. J. B. Beresford Hope, *The Common Sense of Art: A Lecture Delivered in Behalf of the Architectural Museum, at the South Kensington Museum, December 8, 1858* (London: John Murray, 1858), 10, 13.

95. According to Mallgrave, "Semper was hired by London representatives of Canada, Turkey, Sweden, and Denmark to design the [display] layouts for their products." See Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Harry Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 26.

96. Semper used an unattributed citation in *Science, Industry, and Art*. Semper, *The Four Elements,* 136.

97. His theory of style does not emphasize any specificity in architecture of a particular period or place but rather attempts to identify features that transcend time. Just as visitors of the Great Exhibition were supposed to decipher compositional or verbal connections among grouped commodities, Semper argues that the same way of thinking applies to the knowledge of historical architecture. He introduces the notion of a "primordial motive," which reappears in different historical buildings "like a musical theme." As an example, he refers to building decorations as originating from and related to the earliest spatial dividers made of woven fabric, and he identifies these motifs in Assyria, Rome, and Medieval Europe, as well as in products exhibited in the Crystal Palace. Ibid., 137.

98. Ibid., 138.

99. Ibid., 142.

100. Ibid., 268.

101. Ibid., 283.

102. Ibid., 284.

103. Ibid., 257.

104. Photography, for example, belongs to this category. The truthfulness of a photorealistic image was seemingly guaranteed by the principles of technology that produced it, but at the same time its realistic effect erased even the desire to see how the image was constructed, how it reflected and implied the value-laden choices a photographer makes. The mask of photochemically recorded appearances became transparent and imperceptible.

105. "A Palatial Office: New Buildings of Messrs. A. and F. Pears, in New Oxford-Street," *ILN,* November 24, 1888: 624. This was an example of a trend to merge architecture and advertising. A few years later, in 1895, the editors of *The Building News* lamented that a "self-laudatory 'advertisement' style" dominated architecture. ("Reasonable Requirements," *The Building News*, March 8, 1895: 325–26.) The fiercest competition must have been among those who spearheaded techniques of commercial promotion, many of them producers of soap. In another article, the same editors specifically scolded "a well-known soap-dealer" who had travestied historical patterns of architecture to shock the viewer and draw attention to the company logo. ("Royal Institute of British Architects," *The Building News*, February 15, 1895: 224–26.)

106. Actually, designers used the Pompeian court in the Sydenham Crystal Palace as a more accessible and easier to verify stylistic template. At the time the article was written, not only architecture but the way it was discussed revealed how deeply commercialism penetrated all aspects of thinking and communicating. "A Palatial Office" consistently mixes information and commercial promotion. Discussion of the artistic merit of an aspect of the Pears building is always accompanied by commercial reference to a company that provided related services because this type of infomercial attracted potential clients.

107. Although not visible in Figure 4.25a, the space around the pool would be much darker than that adjacent to the window, and this would add to the viewer's curiosity. Figure 4.25b, the other image of the building, reveals that there was one more sculpture positioned in front of the second window and it showed a woman washing a child, in a scene similar to that in Figure 4.7c.

108. *ILN,* November 24, 1888: 624.

109. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959, [1916]), 111–22 [based on lectures from 1906 to 1911].

110. Published as a full-page layout in *ILN,* October 30, 1886.

5. High Modernism according to Le Corbusier

1. Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Modern Architectural Theory: A historical Survey, 1673–1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 195.

2. Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

3. Ibid., 31, 198.

4. Ibid., 225.

5. Walter Gropius, "Die Entwicklung Moderner Industriebaukunst," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes* (1913): 16–22. The collection includes photographs of grain elevators and day-lit factory buildings.

6. Le Corbusier wrote to Gropius in 1919, the year when *L'Esprit Nouveau* was established, asking him to lend the photographs for use in the magazine.

7. *De Stijl* in 1921, *Uj Müveszek Könyve* in 1922, and *MA* in 1923.

8. Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture, 1900–1925* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 11.

9. Walter Gropius, "The Development of Modern Industrial Architecture, 1913" in *Architecture and Design, 1890–1939: An International Anthology of Original Articles*, ed. Tim and Charlotte Benton and Dennis Sharp (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1975), 55.

10. Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès et cie., 1923).

11. This image was initially published in the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 96. Its composition was the same as in *Vers une architecture*, 18.

12. In the English version, Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 29 (page 16 in the 19th issue of the French edition).

13. The photograph shows the Pennsylvania elevator, also known as elevator number 3, built for James Stewart & Co., Baltimore. When it was published in *Why Build Fireproof?* (Chicago: Portland Cement Association, 1917) the image was graphically unaltered, just cropped at the bottom.

14. Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), based on Beatriz Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography," *Assemblage* 4 (Oct. 1987): 6–23.

15. Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, 114, 118.

16. Ibid., 90.

17. Colomina acknowledged that studying Le Corbusier's work poses a challenge. Because he worked as "photographer, writer, painter, sculptor, [and] editor," he is frequently treated as a "multitalented individual capable of producing valuable work in different, specialized branches of knowledge." However, she says, this assumption about his scholarship is inadequate and masks his "fundamentally nonacademic method of working." Ibid., 83.

18. In Jonathan Crary's words, in the early nineties, Paul Cézanne realized and tested the idea that in the world transformed by new techniques of visuality a painter must "confron[t] and inhabi[t] the instability of perception itself." Jonathan Crary, *Suspension of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 288. In the last years of his life, Cézanne "referred to himself as a 'sensitized plate,' that he aspired to be a 'recording machine,' and a 'damned good machine.'" Ibid., 341. The citations are from Joachim Gasquet, *Joachim Gasquet's Cézanne*, trans. Christopher Pemberton (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 148–54. Crary also discusses the relationships one may observe between Georges Seurat's work and contemporaneous technologies of visuality. The compositions of many of Seurat's paintings could be discussed as exploring issues similar to those outlined in the representational constitution of Figures 4.12 and 4.13. A few years before the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, Ozenfant made a similar observation about those painters in *L'Élan*.

19. Russian filmmakers, for example Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, could serve as a crowning example of that kind of cinematic experimentation. Ideological and political aspects of graphic montage are discussed in *Montage and Modern Life: 1919–1924*, ed. Matthew Teitelbaum (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

20. Giuliano Gresleri, introduction to Ch.-E. Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient: Carnets* (Milano: Electa spa; Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2002 [c 1987]), 18.

21. Giuliano Gresleri, *Le Corbusier, viaggio in Oriente: Gli inediti di Charles Edouard Jeanneret, fotografo e scrittore* (Venezia: Marsilio; Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 1984). The four images reprinted here, Figures 5.4a–5.4d, were published on pages 115, 249, 267, 348.

22. According to Stanislaus von Moos, Le Corbusier's initial interest in urban monuments and their narratives was triggered by Charles L'Eplattenier. Stanislaus von Moos and Arthur Rüegg, eds., *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier: Applied Arts, Architecture, Painting, Photography, 1907–1922* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 164.

23. Leo Schubert suggests that in this respect he was following ideas about urban orders introduced by Paul Schultze-Naumburg, especially that the "eye need not be bound by the verbal reasoning that is customarily regarded as the only 'logical' form of thought." See Leo Schubert, "Jeanneret, the City, and Photography," in von Moos and Rüegg, *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier*, 57.

24. A complete collection of sketches from the voyage was published by Fondation Le Corbusier. See Le Corbusier (Ch.-E. Jeanneret), *Voyage d'Orient* and Le Corbusier (Ch.-E. Jeanneret), *Voyage d'Allemagne: Carnets* (Milano: Electa architecture; Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2002) and Le Corbusier (Ch.-E. Jeanneret), *Les voyages d'Allemagne: Carnets* (New York : Monacelli Press, 1995). During his earlier trips, such as a 1907 trip to Italy, he produced predictable and conventional schoolwork-like pictures.

25. Generally speaking, his sketchbooks served as a repository of found forms and impressions. In this way they were grounded in the nineteenth-century traditions discussed in chapter 4. Von Moos discusses how the carnets created the "effect . . . of a kaleidoscope" in "Voyages en Zigzag," in *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier*, 29–30.

26. See similar colored drawings in *Les voyages d'Allemagne*, Carnet 1: 37 and Carnet 2: 125–26.

27. The sketch shown in Figure 5.5c was published in Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient,* Carnet 5: 61. It resulted from a series of explorations of the same place recorded in the carnet on pages 34 and 37.

28. They were published in Le Corbusier, *Voyage d'Orient*, Carnet 4: 133, 134, 135.

29. As Leo Schubert discusses, later in his life, Le Corbusier incorrectly declared he had abandoned photography around 1910, following his disappointing experiences with his first cheap Kodak camera. Actually, he not only used a better camera during his voyage d'Orient but even made enthusiastic statements about the "miracle of photography." See Leo Schubert, "Jeanneret, the City, and Photography"in Von Moos and Rüegg, *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier,* 55–56.

30. Le Corbusier, *Creation Is a Patient Search* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1960), 37.

31. See, for example, Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture,* 117, 172, or 107, 161.

32. Paul Valéry referred to *Vers une architecture* as "Une parfaite machine à lire" in his "Les deux vertus d'un livre" [1926], *Oeuvres,* 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Plèiade, 1960), 2: 1249.

33. The original Alinari photograph, which Le Corbusier retouched, is reproduced in Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, intro. by Jean-Louis Cohen, trans. John Goodman (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 36.

34. A similar practice might be observed in Le Corbusier's attitude toward the representation of technology. Victorians needed empiricism as the epistemological basis of scientific truth to conceal the fact that technical images were used to shape fascinations with the scientific. Le Corbusier, on the other hand, explicitly states that books popularizing science attract him for their "stunning, revealing,

disturbing photographs, or emotive diagrams, graphs, tables." See Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, trans. James I. Dunnett (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 125.

35. Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, 134–35.

36. In later editions the text was reduced to captions only, and the images were even larger.

37. In 1921, while working on the book layout, Le Corbusier still considered placing both of these pictures in an upright position. See Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, 30, 33.

38. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 173.

39. Ibid., 143.

40. Ibid., 74.

41. Ibid., 73–74.

42. John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1989), 104.

43. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art*, 132. See also H. Allen Brooks, *Le Corbusier's Formative Years: Charles-Edouard Jeanneret at La Chaux-de-Fonds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 69.

44. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 138.

45. Ibid., 271.

46. Le Corbusier, *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: G. Crès et cie., 1925).

47. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art*, 167.

48. Ibid., 132.

49. Ibid., 53.

50. Ibid., 54.

51. See examples of such exploratory sketches in Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, 97, 99, 116, 126.

52. It was unavoidable that Le Corbusier had to engage the issue of sexuality in his representational explorations of reality, since it was one of the most powerful forces behind commercial techniques. Since the Victorian era, erotic content was the driving force behind many promotional tactics and the key example of the hidden control of desires. A new kind of designer must have sensed, and thus studied, its powerful role in the new culture.

53. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret and Amédée Ozenfant, *Après le cubisme* (Paris: Édition des Commentaires, 1918). Translated in Carol S. Eliel, *L'Esprit nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918–1925* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001).

54. Eliel, *L'Esprit nouveau: Purism*, 152.

55. Ibid., 158. For comparison, see Peirce's discussion of "the sensation beautiful" in Charles S. Peirce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2 (1868).

56. Eliel, *L'Esprit nouveau: Purism*, 163.

57. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art*, 186.

58. Ibid., 188, 190.

59. Ibid., 192.

60. Ibid., 189.

61. Ibid., 192.

62. The photograph in Figure 5.11a was published in Le Corbusier, *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (Paris: G. Crès et cie., 1925), 157.

63. See, for example, *Almanach*, 139, 148, 152, 153.

64. The site for the pavilion was determined after the design was completed, and the tree in the middle of the courtyard could not have been part of the Voisin Plan.

65. Le Corbusier, *Almanach*, 136. De Monzie was supportive of these new ideas and, according to Le Corbusier, he officially intervened when the authorities of the exposition sabotaged the pavilion and kept it hidden behind a temporary fence.

Closing Remarks

1. Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order in Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), xx.

2. Commercial visions of African and Muslim cultures discussed in chapter 5 exemplify these processes.

3. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991, a collection of essays published earlier), x.

4. Charles A. Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977).

5. Ibid., 87.

6. Ibid., 90.

7. Ruskin, cited in George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), 185.

8. Other writers, such as Jürgen Habermas and Jean-François Lyotard, have also identified ways in which postmodernism represented elements of the premodern.

9. In reality, this agreement was among Paolo Portogesi, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Robert Stern, Vincent Scully, and Charles Jencks, who participated in the first architectural exhibition at the Biennale in Venice in 1980.

10. Rem Koolhaas, "Junkspace," in *Project on the City: The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*, ed. Chuihua Judy Chung et al. (Köln: Taschen, 2001), 415.

11. See, for example, *Lagos: Wide and Close, Interactive Journey into an Exploding City*, a movie by Rem Koolhaas and Bregtje Haak (2005), and Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos: How It Works* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2008).

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Andrzej Piotrowski is associate professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota. Educated as an architect in Poland, he has practiced in both Poland and the United States. He is coeditor of *The Discipline of Architecture* (Minnesota, 2000).

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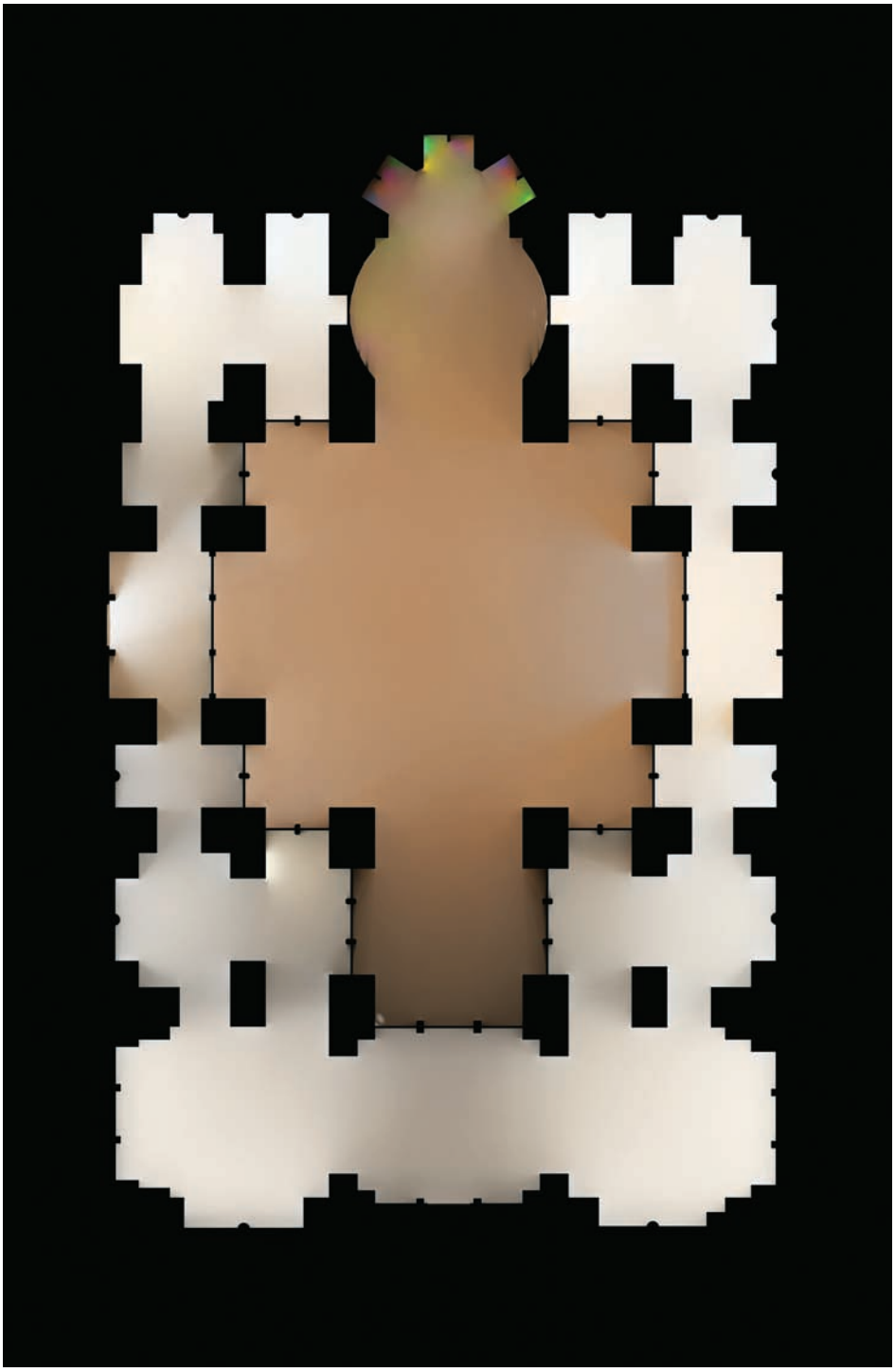

Plate 1

Plates 2.a and 2.b

Plate 3

Plate 4

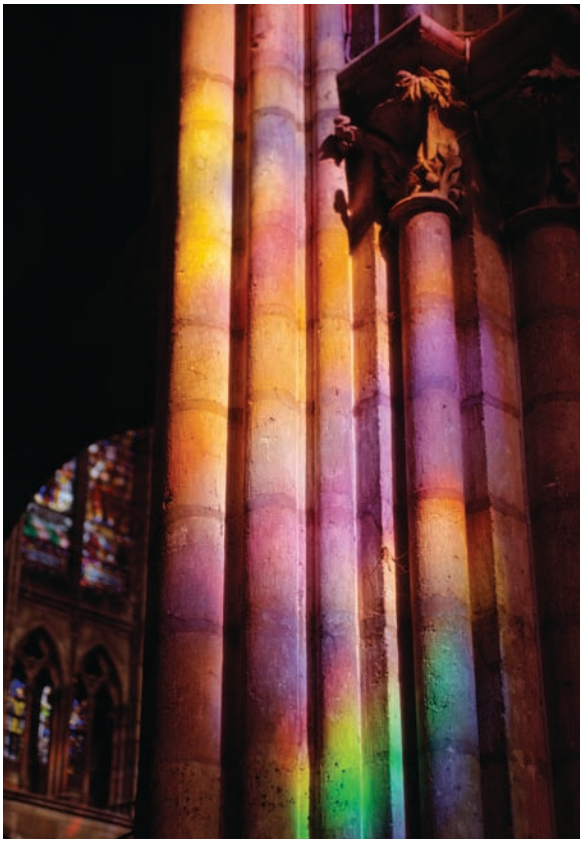

Plate 5

Plates 6.a and 6.b

Plate 7

Plate 8

Plate 9

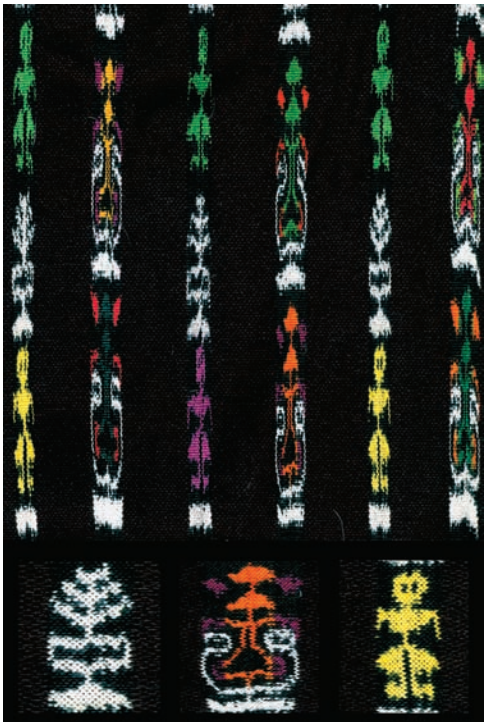

Plate 10

Plate 11

Plate 12

Plate 13

Plate 14

Plate 15

Plate 16